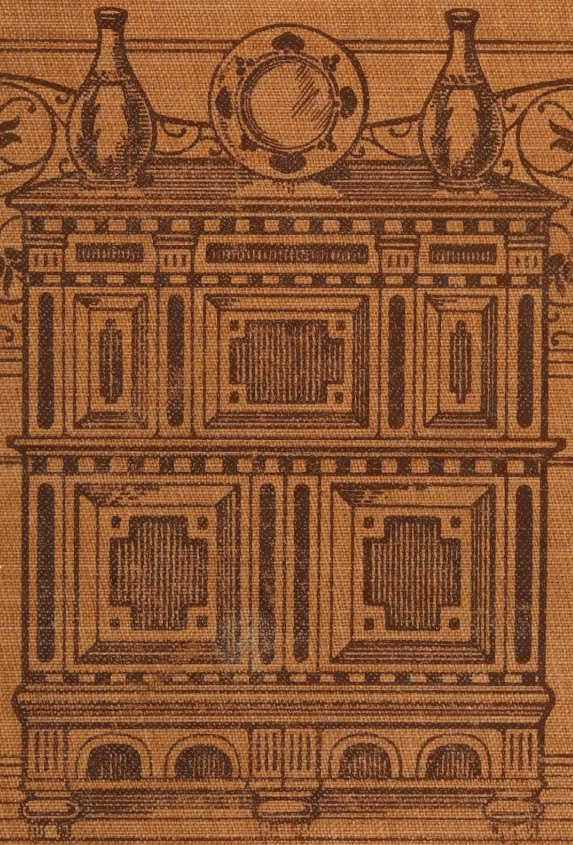
HOW TO COLLECT OLD FURNITURE



BY FREDERICK LITCHFIELD

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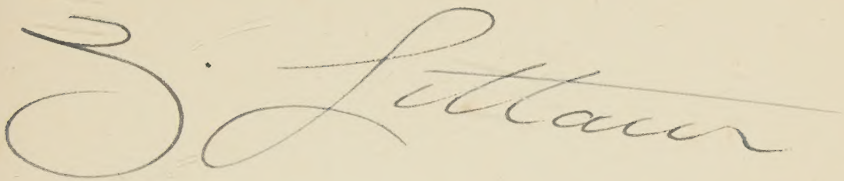

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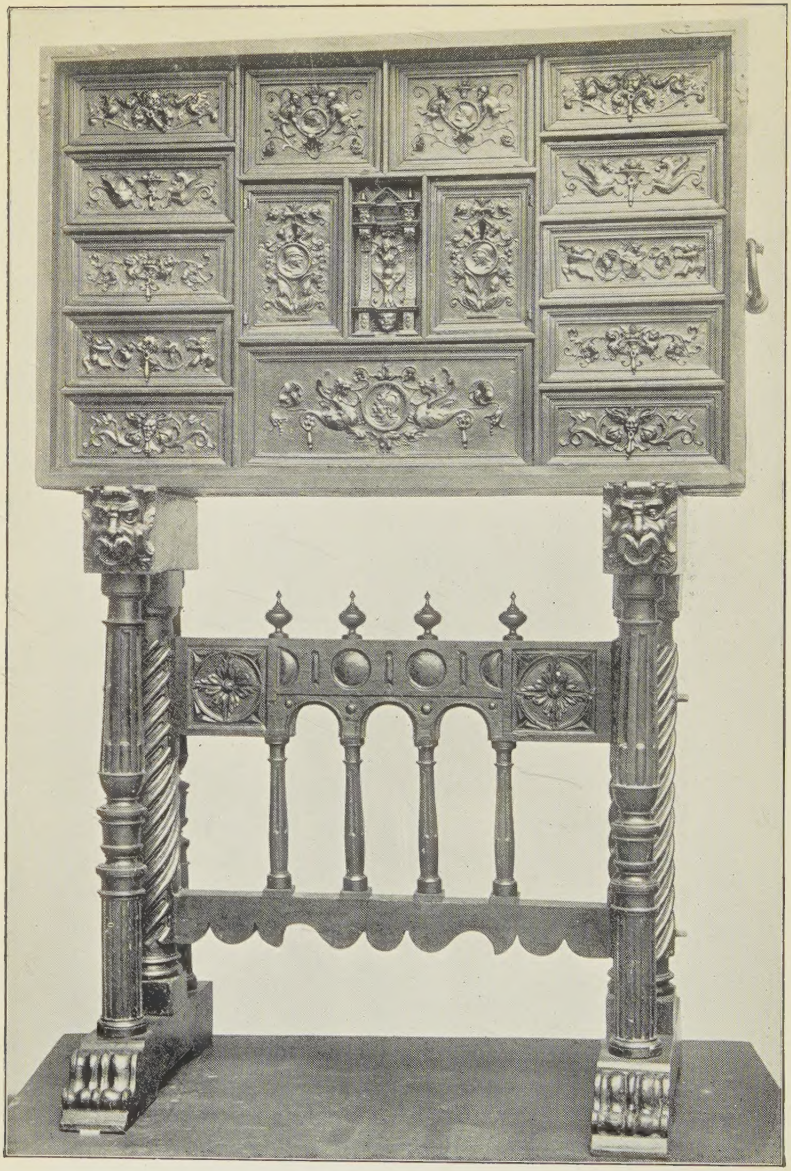

SPANISH RENAISSANCE CABINET CARVED IN CHESTNUT WOOD
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

HOW TO COLLECT OLD FURNITURE

BY

FREDERICK LITCHFIELD

AUTHOR OF "ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF FURNITURE," "POTTERY AND PORCELAIN," A GUIDE TO COLLECTORS, EDITOR OF "CHAFFERS' MARKS AND MONOGRAMS ON POTTERY AND PORCELAIN," ETC.

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PREFACE

IN another work on the subject of Furniture I have endeavoured to trace the changes in style and fashion from Antique to Mediaeval, from Mediaeval to Renaissance, and from Renaissance to Modern, but in the following notes I have attempted to give the reader some descriptions of the various kinds of furniture, made in different countries, from the sixteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, omitting the earlier periods. As examples of the latter are seldom seen except in museums, they are, for all practical purposes, unobtainable by the collector of ordinary means.

I have tried to convey by explanatory hints and suggestions, advice which may enable the reader to select the example of the period he is in search of, and avoid the imitation and the sham.

The information given in this book is more elementary and practical, than theoretical and historical; therefore but little has been said of those magnificent *pièces de luxe* which are only to be purchased by the millionaire collector, and more attention has been devoted to the domestic furniture of the last three hundred years, which so many persons of taste in these latter days like to see represented among their household gods.

A liberal supply of illustrations to these notes should render them intelligible and useful, and

help the readers to have about them some old furniture of which they can tell the origin, the country, and date of manufacture, and in many cases assist them to identify a favourite specimen as the work of an individual maker.

In order that the collector may be able to compare the illustration of a particular specimen with the article itself, the half-tone blocks are, with few exceptions, produced from photographs of examples available to the public in the Victoria and Albert Museum of South Kensington, and to the Science and Art Department, controlling that useful national collection, my grateful acknowledgements are tendered for the generous permission to use Museum photographs.

The glossary of terms used in connection with furniture, many of which have peculiar and technical meanings not to be found in the dictionary, but constantly occurring in catalogues and written descriptions of old furniture, will, it is hoped, be of service to the reader.

FREDERICK LITCHFIELD.

32, *St. James's Street,*
Piccadilly, London, W.

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A WINDOW SEAT, BY A. HEPPELWHITE

HOW TO
COLLECT OLD FURNITURE

CHAPTER I

FURNITURE OF THE RENAISSANCE

End of the fifteenth century and beginning of the Renaissance —Andrea Palladio and his work—Inigo Jones—The introduction of the cabinet, development of the table and the chair—Alteration of the chimney-piece—Carved work in the Netherlands and Spain—The Tudor style in England, Hampton Court Palace—The Livery cupboard—Elizabethan work and famous examples—Silver furniture of late Renaissance.

IN a popular handbook on furniture it is unnecessary and undesirable to consider in detail the historical and social events which influenced the manners and customs, the architecture, and the domestic arts and industries of different nations, but without some allusion to these contributory causes, it is difficult to appreciate the changes and variations, sometimes sudden and sometimes gradual, which affected the designs and styles of the furniture of successive periods.

Towards the latter end of the fifteenth century a great art movement commenced in Italy, spread to the Netherlands, Spain and Germany, which were then under the widespread sceptre of Charles V, and passed to France, whose king had married a daughter of the great Medici family, and after-

wards, during the reign of Henry VIII, was introduced into England.

We must remember that the ancient or antique period had passed away with the decline of the vast Roman empire, and had been succeeded by a period of art known as Mediaeval, which embraced the Byzantine and Gothic styles of building, decoration and ornament. The Gothic, with its different divisions and varieties, was now to give way to the new movement, termed Renaissance or re-birth, which, commencing in the fifteenth found expression and development in the sixteenth century. Every art student knows what an extraordinary period was the sixteenth century for the production and encouragement of great men in art, painters, sculptors, architects, designers and workers in gold, silver and bronze, potters and enamellers, weavers of beautiful textiles, and last, though by no means least, makers, carvers, and inlayers of ornamental woodwork and furniture.

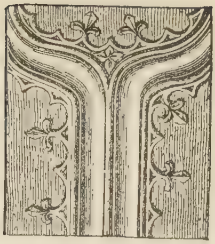
The illustration which I am able to give of four panels of carved oak from the South Kensington collection, shows four different styles of woodcarving of this period of transition, and is useful to assist one in determining the kind of enrichment of late fifteenth century ornament.

The woodwork of the Mediaeval time was limited to the spare equipment of the feudal castle and the limited furnishing of the monastic house or church. The castle was now giving way to the palace or mansion, the use of gunpowder and firearms had contributed materially to change the character of the noble's residence; the rich burgess and merchant were everywhere asserting the power and influence of successful trade and enter-

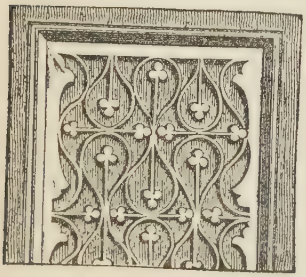
ITALIAN RENAISSANCE MIRROR FRAME IN CARVED WALNUT
LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CASSONE IN CARVED WALNUT
LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

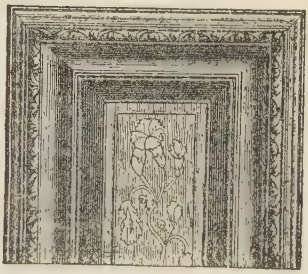
ENGLISH, FIFTEENTH CENTURY



FLEMISH, SIXTEENTH CENTURY



FRENCH, SIXTEENTH CENTURY



GERMAN, FIFTEENTH CENTURY

ITALIAN, SIXTEENTH CENTURY

EXAMPLES OF OAK CARVING

prise, the arts of war were making way for the arts of peace, and the people of the capitals and centres of civilization in the different countries of Europe, were beginning to decorate and furnish their homes according to some idea of comfort and luxury.

The general scheme of the leaders of the new movement, chief of whom were Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael, was to abolish the Gothic principles of their predecessors, and to re-establish the simplicity and purity of the earlier Greek and Roman styles.

As an architect of the sixteenth century Andrea Palladio probably did more than any other man to give expression to the new movement in the buildings of his time, and the Italian palaces designed by him were the elaboration of the types of temples and city gates of ancient Rome. He appears to have been fascinated by the fine proportions, the stateliness and dignity of these ancient piles, and the school of architecture which came in after years to be known as Palladian, had a lasting influence upon the architecture of other nations. Inigo Jones, our great seventeenth-century designer, may be said to have built Whitehall Palace under the inspiration of Palladio's teaching and the Renaissance influence.

Furniture and woodwork of the period were affected as a natural consequence of the alteration in the elevation and plan, in the style and ornament of the building itself, and necessarily the panellings and mouldings, the cornices, enrichments, and all the equipment and furnishings, to a great extent followed the lines and spirit of the exterior.

The cabinet as a piece of furniture may be said to have first made its appearance in the sixteenth century; the chest, the credence, the buffet had been in existence much earlier, but not the cabinet, and it now took the form of a miniature gateway or part of a temple or a palace, which served as the model of the sixteenth-century designer. The interior decorations of some of these cabinets were arranged with pilasters, columns, and arcaded ornament, like the interiors of the palaces themselves, and not infrequently we find the floor or platform of these interior recesses inlaid with small squares or geometrical patterns in perspective, to imitate the floor of the vestibule of the palace from which the scheme of design was adopted.

To the sixteenth century also belongs the *cassone* or marriage chest, of which there are some good examples in the South Kensington Museum, and just as the cabinet had its prototype in the classic temple or gateway, so was the Italian *cassone* an elaboration of the antique sarcophagus. In Venice it was richly carved in walnut wood with Raphaelesque scrolls, and ornamented with the armorial bearings of the noble family whose daughter was to be married, or it was carved and gilded, and on the gold ground was painted a reproduction of a classic frieze, or the representation of some historical event. In Milan it was of ebonized or brown wood inlaid with ivory; but whatever the form of enrichment and elaboration, the antique sarcophagus was the prototype.

Tables for the first time in the history of woodwork became more general as complete articles of furniture, made of wood, and elaborately carved and inlaid. In the fifteenth century, with few excep-

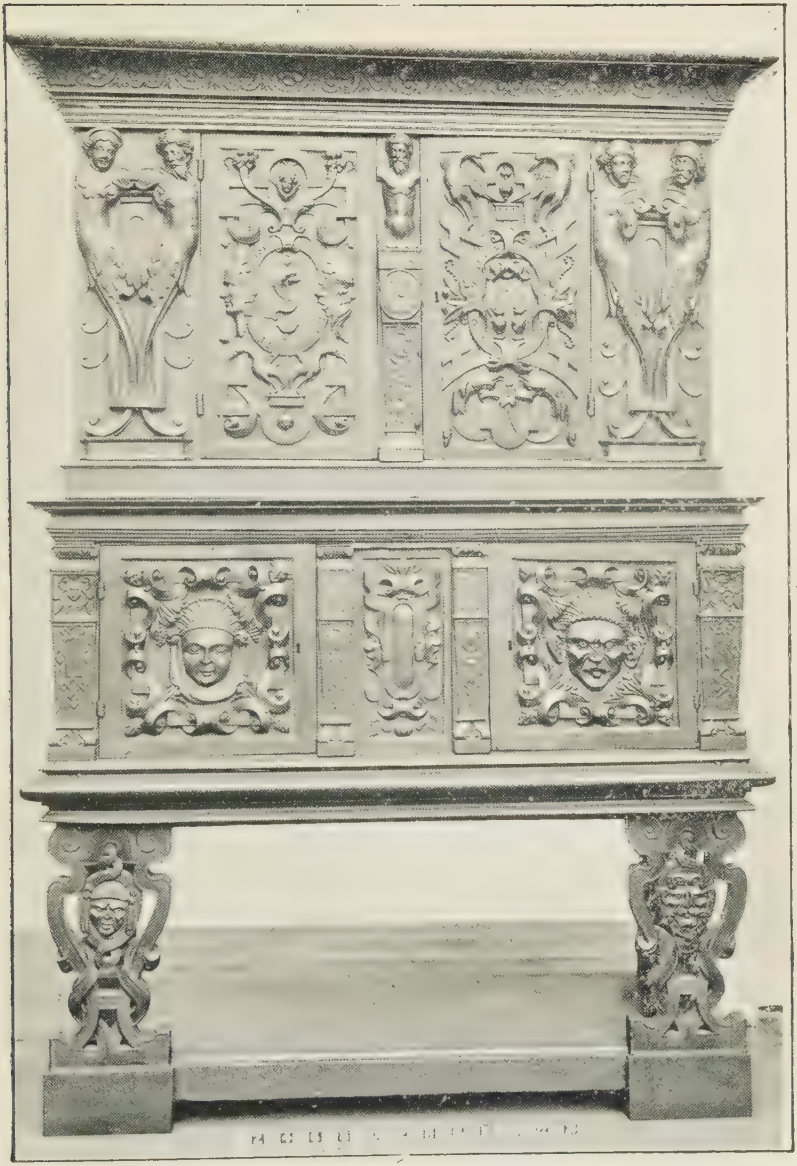
tions, the table for meals had consisted of an arrangement of boards and trestles, and we have some reminiscence of this movable kind of table in the expression, "a seat at the board," in our language of to-day. Some of the illustrations will show sixteenth-century tables of Italian workmanship, and in England we had the "drawinge" table, which in the chapter on Jacobean furniture has received more detailed description.

Until the sixteenth century was well advanced the chair had been a kind of throne or state seat used by the master of the house, the seigneur or lord, or for his honoured guest; in cathedrals, abbeys and churches for the bishop, the archbishop or the abbot, and in palaces for the king and queen. As we have remarked upon the expression of "a seat at the board," so that of "taking the chair" is clearly a survival of a time when the chair was the place of honour. Gradually the chair became an article of domestic furniture, and as rooms were of smaller dimensions and the life of the people more social, chairs became more numerous and more ordinary. The upholstered seat and back with padded arms were all of later date; in the sixteenth century they were made of wood with a loose cushion attached by strings.

Pictures were framed, and mirrors, which were now of larger size than formerly, became ornamental as well as useful articles of furniture in a house.

Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan, Ferrara, Urbino, and other Italian cities produced richly carved furniture, cabinets, tables, chairs, caskets, *cassoni*, mirror frames and bellows of elaborate design and beautiful execution.

In France under Francis I the Renaissance



FRENCH RENAISSANCE CABINET IN OAK
SIXTEENTH CENTURY (HENRI II)

movement found great encouragement. An Italian architect was employed to build the new château of Fontainebleau, and Leonardo da Vinci and

VENETIAN MIRROR, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Andrea del Sarto came from Italy to decorate the interior.

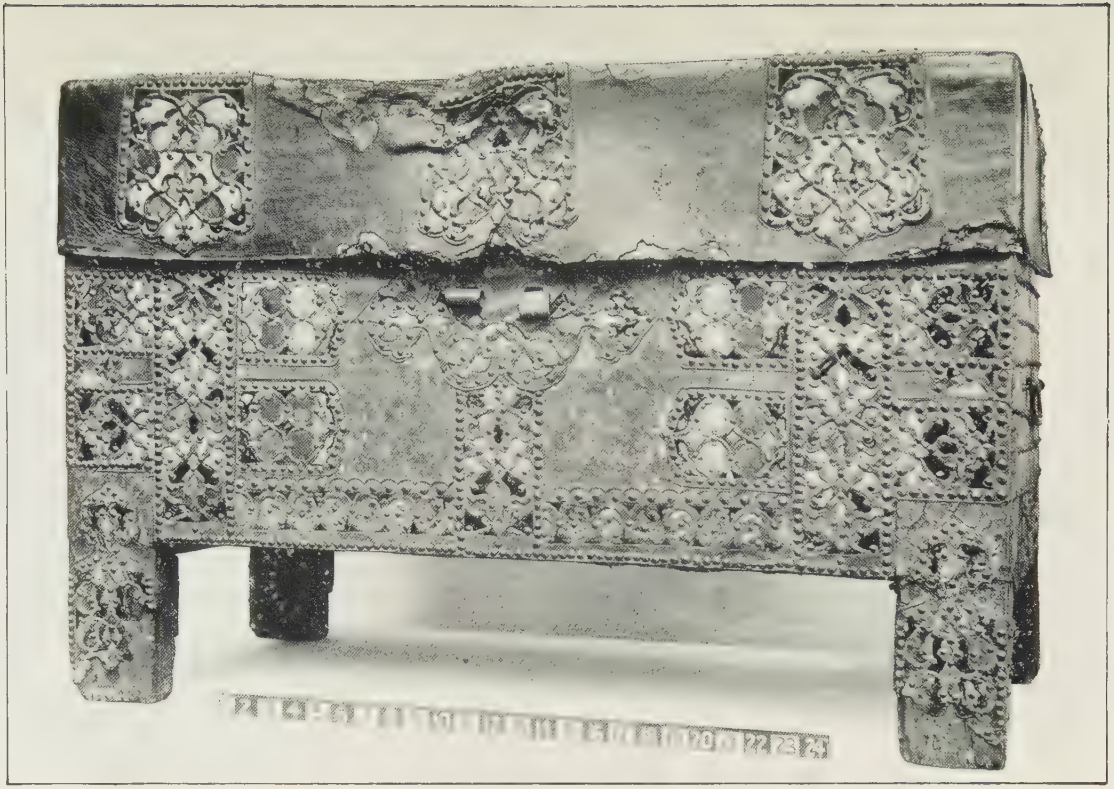
The courtiers and nobles followed their king's lead, and their châteaux were decorated in the new Italian style. Chimney-pieces, which in the preceding century had been of stone, were now

made of oak elaborately carved with columns and pilasters, arched recesses and armorial bearings. The *prie-dieu* chair, which had formerly been used only in the private chapel of the castle, became more common, benches or *sieges* and *bancs* were carved and ornamented, and with the buffet and armoire, formed part of the furnishing of a nobleman's residence. The Musée Cluny contains numerous examples of French furniture of the Renaissance period.

The Netherlands and Spain followed suit. The Flemish craftsman excelled in the art of carving; both he and his Spanish contemporary added a realistic effect by colouring the faces of their figure-work with colours *au naturel*. In the Netherlands, as in France, oak was the favourite wood, but ebony, cypress, cedar and other woods were used; while in Spain chestnut was the more usual vehicle for the carved design. Inlaid patterns were enriched by plaques of ivory, agate, and rare marbles, and hinge and lock plates, with elaborate keyhole mounts of beautifully wrought silver and steel, were added.

In England the adoption of the Renaissance was of slower growth. Holbein and John of Padua came to England under the patronage of Henry VIII, and were apostles of the new style, but the Gothic died hard in this country, and during the transition period, which lasted until the time of Queen Elizabeth, we had a mixture of Gothic ornament and Renaissance design which has come to be known as the Tudor style. The older portions of Hampton Court Palace built by Cardinal Wolsey, (not the later portions designed by Sir Christopher Wren in imitation of the Palace of Versailles), and the fine Halls of Oxford, were

FLEMISH RENAISSANCE CABINET CARVED IN EBONY
LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY



GERMAN RENAISSANCE COFFER
SIXTEENTH CENTURY

erected about this time, and show the mingling of the Gothic and Renaissance styles. The oak panelling, which we to-day know as the linen pattern because it represents in carved wood the convolutions of the linen napkin, is of this period.

Written descriptions of furniture are difficult to make clear and intelligible, but some of the illustrations selected will serve to show the kind of Tudor woodwork which was in favour during the reign of Henry VIII.

What are known as "Livery cupboards" were first made in England in the early part of the sixteenth century. They were service cupboards used for drinking cups, which were hung on hooks, and a ewer and basin were part of the equipment for the cleansing of vessels after use.

As the century advanced, and during the reign of Elizabeth, all trace of the Gothic influence vanished, and carved and ornamental woodwork became more ambitious, less restrained, and even riotous. We find the large acorn-shaped ornament as a member of the leg of a carved table, or the pillar of a four-post bedstead; the high oak carved chimney-pieces are full of ornament, and the panelling of rooms is enriched by fluted pilasters with carved capitals. A favourite design was the interlaced riband or "strap work," much used in stone, in the exterior ornamentation of houses, and also adopted by the carver in his work on panelling and furniture.

This over-elaboration of ornament during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign in England corresponds to the later Renaissance in France in the time of Henri Quatre, where a similar decadence from the canons of good taste took effect, as a

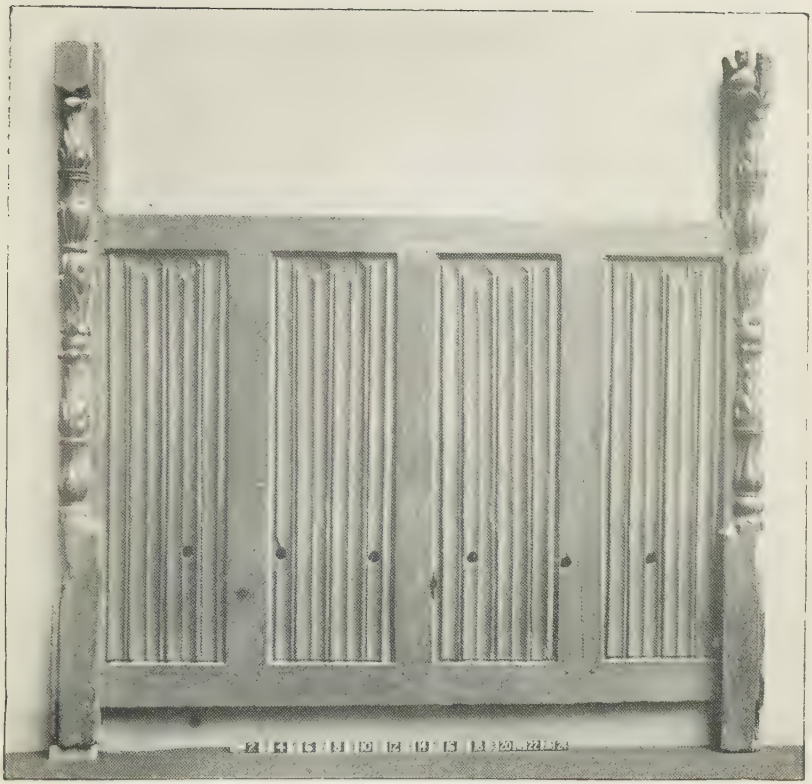
falling away from the purer style of François Premier and of Henri Deux.

There are in London several excellent examples of Elizabethan panelling which, although of easy access, are seldom visited, and these are well worth the reader's attention. The Hall of Gray's Inn with its minstrels' gallery, the magnificent Hall of the Middle Temple just out of the Strand, also that fine old monument of Elizabethan days, and the reminder of Thackeray's dear old Colonel Newcome, the Charterhouse, in Aldersgate Street. These valuable relics of sixteenth-century work can all be seen without trouble or expense by any London resident or visitor, and will give a better idea of the oak-work of the Renaissance in England than pages of written description.

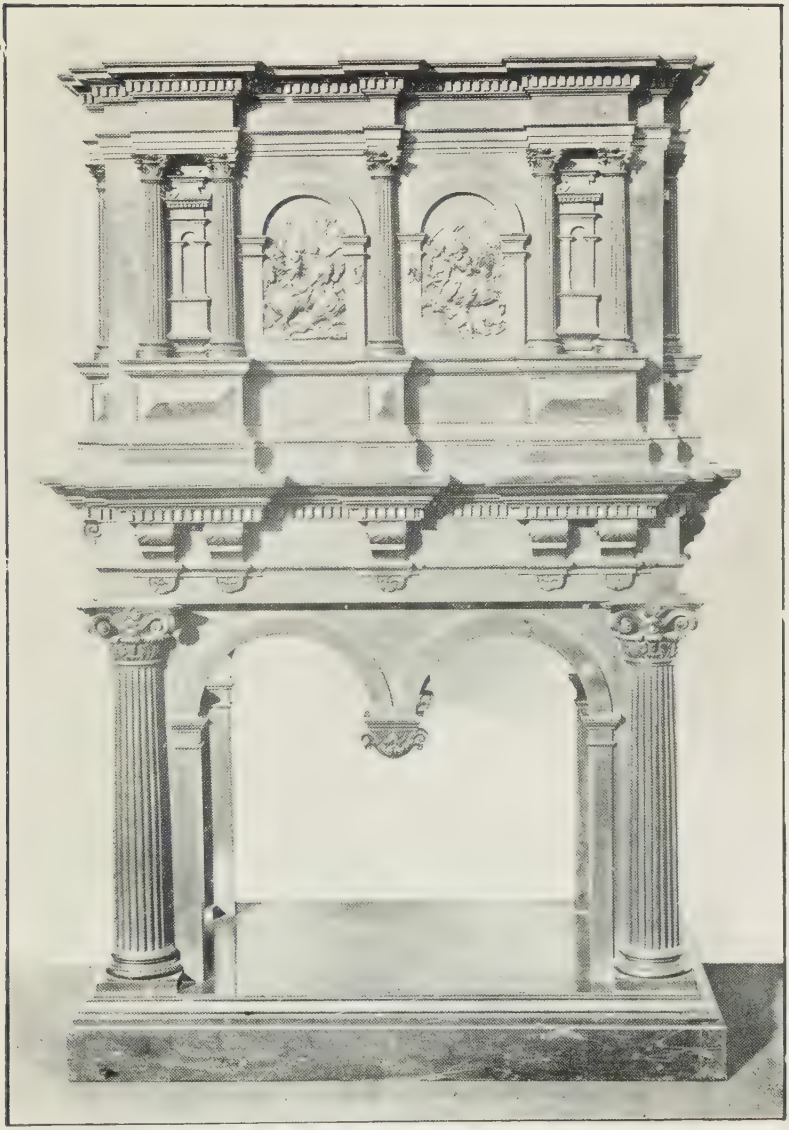
Throughout Europe the latter part of the sixteenth century showed deterioration from the commencement of the great Renaissance movement, as designers moved farther away from their original classic types, and allowed ornament to become less restrained, less subsidiary to lines of construction, more fanciful and less reasonable.

To the period of late Renaissance belongs the manufacture of silver furniture. This was made in Spain and Italy for the churches, and in Germany, at Augsburg and other cities, where the silversmith flourished, and executed the commands of ambitious German princes. The famous folding-chair of wonderfully wrought steel, which is now at Longford Castle in Wiltshire, belongs to this type of furniture, and was made at Augsburg.

The fine table and pair of *torchères* at Knole are of solid silver, and bear the hall-mark of the reign of James II.



ENGLISH, END OF BEDSTEAD IN OAK
(SHOWING LINEN PATTERN PANELS)
SIXTEENTH CENTURY (EARLY TUDOR STYLE)



ENGLISH RENAISSANCE CABINET
SIXTEENTH CENTURY

ENGLISH RENAISSANCE PANELLING OF CARVED OAK
FROM AN OLD HOUSE AT WALTHAM
SIXTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER II

JACOBEAN FURNITURE

Period of Jacobean design, the Dutch influence—Table in the Carpenter's Hall—"Framed" and "joyned" tables—Work of Inigo Jones—Chairs of James I's time—Knole House and its furniture, chairs and tables of the period, Charles II and the changes of his time—The "split balustrade" ornament—Hampton Court Palace—Halls of the City companies—Grinling Gibbons and his work—Qualities of good Jacobean joinery—Holyrood Palace, and Dalkeith Palace.

THE period of design which we term Jacobean may be said to have lasted for about a century, from the beginning of the reign of James I until the advent of the Dutch influence, which became almost paramount after the accession to the throne of William and Mary, caused a change of fashion.

In the preceding chapter we have seen how the later Elizabethan work had been somewhat over-carved and elaborated with grotesque ornament. Under the influence of Inigo Jones, an architect who came into court favour quite early in the reign of the new king, a more severe tone was observed with regard to ornament in stone and wood, and a period commences which, as regards the work of English joiners, is full of interest for connoisseurs and collectors.

The bold acorn-shaped ornament which was such a marked feature of the carving of the previ-

ous reign, was tabooed, and in its place the legs of tables were either quite plain columns with a capital and base, or, if carved, the lines were more straight, only just breaking into a slight fulness. The octagonal table in the Hall of the Carpenters' Company is a good example of this kind; it has the date 1606 carved in two of the spandrels of the arches which connect the legs, while the other spandrels bear the initials of the Master and the Wardens of the Company of that year.

It is a most interesting piece of furniture because, while the character of the ornamentation has a little of the Elizabethan spirit, one can see that this has been subdued and refined. It is in excellent preservation, except that the top is split, and those who wish to see a representative specimen, made just as a change of style was affecting our ornamental woodwork, should study the table carefully.

We have seen in the chapter on "Renaissance" how during the sixteenth century the "table" was developed from boards and trestles into a complete and solid piece of domestic furniture. These "framed" and "joyned" tables, as they were called, were now made with the plain leg alluded to above, and had drawers with plain or carved fronts.

There are four excellent tables of this period in the Hall of the Barber Surgeons' Company in Monkswell Street, City, a building designed by Inigo Jones, and there is also a good example of the kind in the Chapter House, Westminster. The communion table in the Chapel of the Charterhouse is of a more ornamental character, and shows the influence of the Italian Renaissance which Inigo Jones had brought with him

JACOBEAN BEDSTEAD IN CARVED OAK
EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

from his travels in that country. It has a row of legs running lengthways along the middle of the table, and four others at the corners, enriched by carving from the base to a third of the height of each leg, while the frieze is also carved in low relief.

The chairs of James I period were high-backed, moulded rather than carved, that is, the frames were ornamented only by the members being relieved from plainness by mouldings, but not as a rule having scrolls or flowers, although occasionally one sees an early Jacobean chair having scrolls in low relief.

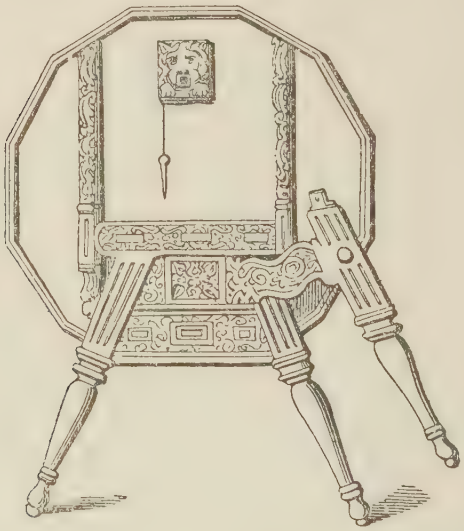
In the International Exhibition of 1901, held at Glasgow, there were some good specimens of Jacobean chairs, lent by some of the old "Trade Houses" of Aberdeen—one of these was "gifted" in 1617 by Alexander Cockie, who had embellished it with his arms, a cock, on a chief, the sun in its splendour, and a crescent between two mullets, with his initials, A. C. The back folds down upon the arms and forms a most convenient card table.

An illustration is given here of a somewhat similar table which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Knole House, near Sevenoaks, is probably the richest in upholstered furniture of this period. The king's bedroom was specially prepared and furnished for the visit of James I, and as any visitor can by the kindness of the present owner, Lord Sackville, see this stately old English mansion with its most interesting contents, it is a pity not to take advantage of the opportunity.

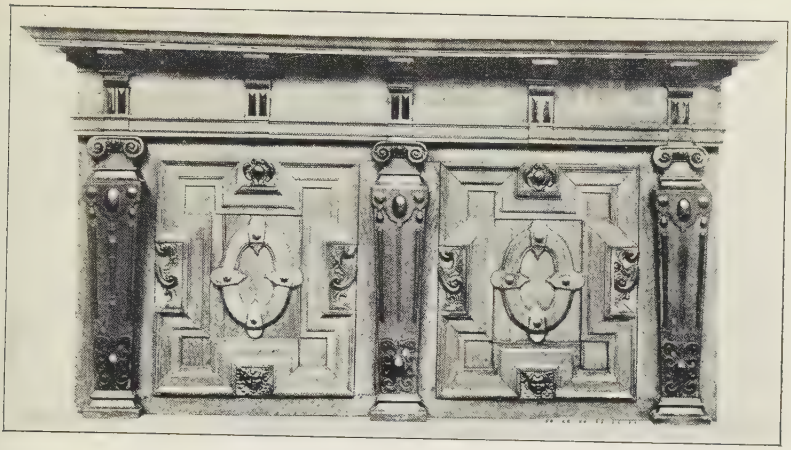
The house is open on Fridays at a nominal charge of two shillings, which goes to the restoration fund.

The student has the great advantage of seeing here furniture as it was, save for dilapidation by time, but without restoration, and many useful lessons may be learned. The famous sofa, probably about the first of its kind, has since been reproduced by Liberty's and one or two other London firms. It was upholstered in crimson velvet, and as the arms at either end could be lowered by a rack, the sofa

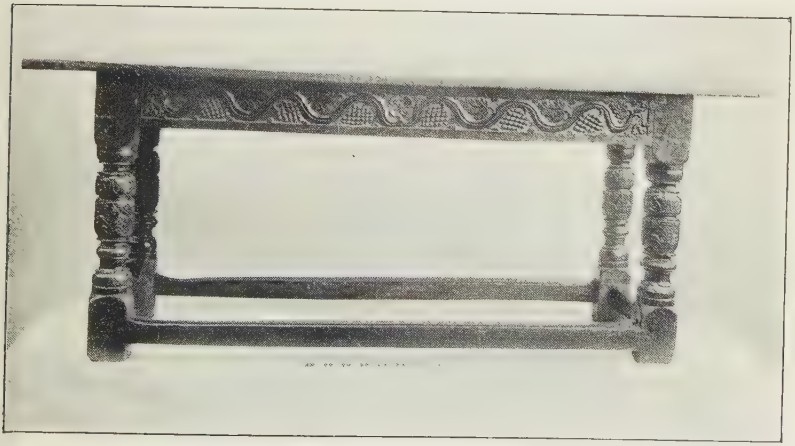


FOLDING TABLE AT FLAXTON HALL, SUFFOLK
(Time of Elizabeth)

or settee became comfortable as a lounge when thus extended. Armchairs, also richly upholstered in the same kind of velvet, were trimmed with handsome fringe and studded with copper nails. In this house there are five stools with X legs, also in velvet with fringe, and the famous King's Bedstead



JACOBEAN UPPER PART OF CHIMNEY-PIECE IN CARVED OAK
EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY (TIME OF INIGO JONES)



JACOBEAN CENTRE TABLE IN CARVED OAK
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

in crimson and gold, now much faded and worn, which is said to have cost £8,000. These are still in the room once occupied by the king.

There is also another room, the furniture of which is said to have been presented by James I to the first Earl of Middlesex, who had married a relation of the Earl of Dorset, to whom Knole at that time belonged.

As an interesting link with the past, one may mention here, that when Sir Charles Eastlake was at Knole making sketches, some of which he afterwards published in "Hints on Household Taste," he found underneath the webbing of a settee a piece of paper with some old English writing and the date 1620. This date, as being approximately that of the furniture which we are now considering, was confirmed by the old heirloom books kept at Knole which Mr. Lionel Sackville kindly referred to for me when I wrote my "Illustrated History of Furniture" in 1890.

In this work the reader will find some fuller descriptions and illustrations of the furniture at Knole, also of the table in the Carpenter's Hall referred to above, the oak work at the Charterhouse, Gray's Inn, and some other Jacobean types.

Some chairs at Knole are of carved oak, and much richer and more decorative than those of earlier date. The design of two cupids in a flying attitude supporting a crown surmounting the back, and a similar design enriching the stretcher, which had generally been adjudged to a later time, seems to have come in towards the end of James I's reign. It is probable that about this time a good deal of the richly-carved and gilt Venetian furniture was brought to England, and that our decorative wood-

work received from this an influence in the direction of elaboration.

The times of Charles I were too troublous for much advancement, or surely this would have been a period when Art in England would have received encouragement and made great progress. Before the Civil War broke out the king and his queen had already done a good deal to promote cultivation and luxury. The great Van Dyke had come to reside in this country, the Mortlake tapestry works were assisted by the gift from the king of the famous Raphael Cartoons, which are now at Hampton Court Palace, and it was a time when, had the political atmosphere remained tranquil, there would have been giant strides in the progress of the domestic arts.

Chairs were now articles of ordinary domestic furniture, tables were made of greater width, and about this time the legs were turned with a large oval member in the middle, an importation from Holland. The folding-table with turned legs—twelve, sixteen, and sometimes twenty in number—came into fashion, and was probably the first of the kind which we now call the "gate leg" table, having two folding flaps which when put up made a large oval-topped table. Another kind of table, which seems to have been introduced during the first half of the seventeenth century, was the "Drawinge" table, which was oblong in shape, with a square-sided flap pulling out from either end to prolong its length, and by an ingenious wedge-shaped contrivance the centre or main table-top was lowered and the flaps came to the new level, so that the whole area was then of the same height. The long settle and a heavy kind of carved armchair,

called the "scrowled" chair, were in use from the time of Charles I to that of James II. The seats of chairs and settees were generally of plain oak, and had loose cushions secured by strings to the chair. Cane seats and backs were, however, now becoming fashionable, and we find some of the Jacobean chairs with a narrow panel of cane work only seven or eight inches wide, with the moulded oak as a frame. This panel was probably covered by a loose cushion.

A plain leather chair, which has been called the "Cromwell," appears to have been largely imported from Holland and to have become fashionable. It was of plain leather, with upholstered seat and back, studded with nails, and only showing just the lower part of the legs and stretcher of wood. During the Commonwealth one would have expected to find an utter absence of figure-carving in all woodwork, but there is a very singular fact, quoted by Mrs. S. C. Hall in describing the interior of a house built for Cromwell's daughter, that the staircase was ornamented by portrait figures of different grades of men in the army which was commanded by her husband, General Ireton.

With the accession of Charles II more luxurious furniture was brought from France and Holland, and copied in this country; carved oak also became more ornamental and elaborate.

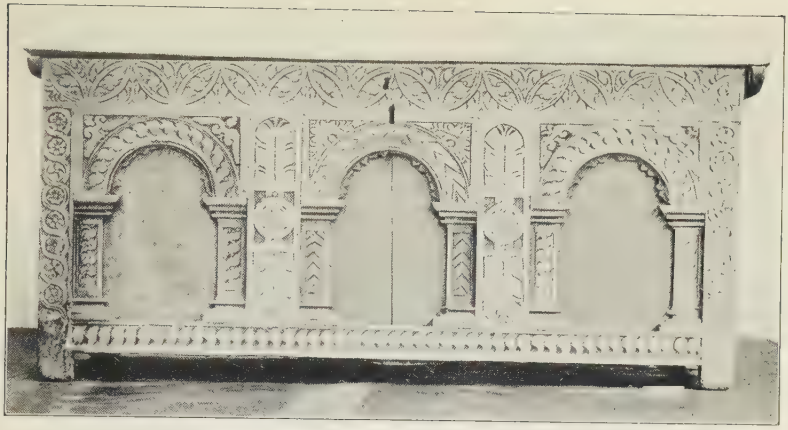
There are one or two new features that have been noticed as making their appearance during the early part of this reign. One is that spiral turning was first introduced into the legs of chairs and tables, and the writer has seen some chairs parts of which have been carved by hand in imitation of spiral turning, showing that there was a

desire to follow the new fashion by more tedious methods, since the new invention and appliances for eccentric turning, had probably at first only reached the metropolis, and the hand spiral work was done in some provincial town.

The panels of oak chests, bedsteads, or other pieces of Jacobean cabinet-work, not infrequently have some relief given by means of pear tree lines stained black, also brown, and a light yellow, similar to the tint of boxwood. A diamond-shaped ornament may be found occasionally in the centre of a panel with all three colours, or the date of a piece may be inlaid in thin black lines, which may also define or emphasize the stalk or the petals of a conventionalized floral design. An old Jacobean head of a "four-poster" with some excellent carving in relief, now mounted into a chimney-piece, is in the possession of Mr. S. A. P. Kitcat, of Esher, and has the initials of its former owner, E. N., and the date 1616 inlaid in black, which has a good effect against the rich, warm tone of the old oak.

Another ornament characteristic of this period is that which for want of a better description has been called "the split balustrade ornament," on chests, presses, and tables. These turned and split balustrades, or short sections of them, are laid on to the flat surface, generally on the rail of a panel, the panel itself being carved somewhat richly.

Bombay and Indo-Portuguese furniture, made of ebony or "blackwood," was imported from one of the new queen's possessions, given as part of her dowry by the King of Portugal. Some of this furniture is at Penshurst Place, and a famous chair of the kind is in the Ashmolean Museum at



JACOBEAN CHEST IN CARVED OAK
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

JACOBEAN COURT CUPBOARD IN CARVED OAK
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Oxford, having been given to Elias Ashmole by King Charles. The furnishing of Hampton Court Palace for the reception of the new queen was, according to Evelyn the famous diarist, a very extravagant and costly business; the bedstead and hangings cost £8,000, and other furnishings, tapestries and accessories, were in accordance with this lavish outlay. We may gather from these and other signs that the time of Charles II was one of much more comfort and luxury in the furniture of the upper classes than had previously been the case.

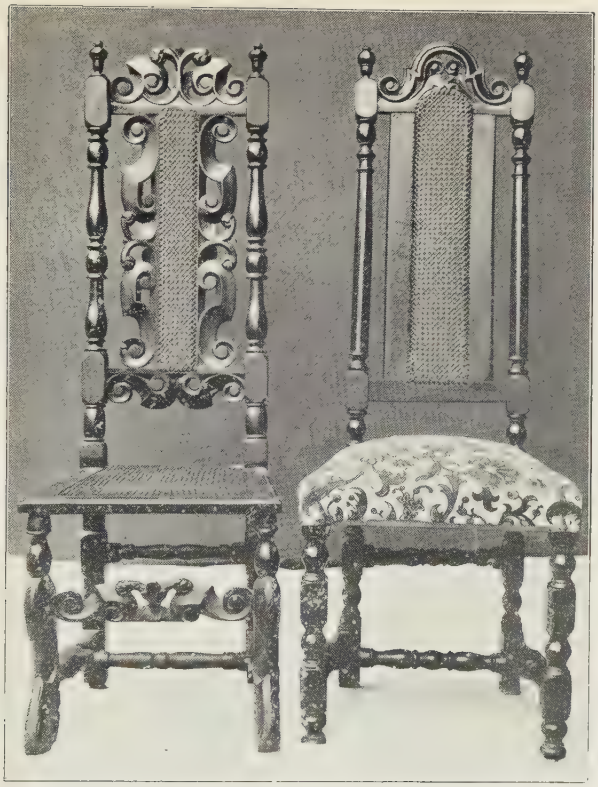
It is a sad pity that the Great Fire of London, in 1666, destroyed so many public buildings, and with them the ancient Halls of the City Guilds, which would otherwise have preserved to us so much valuable and interesting furniture. Some few of these were only partially destroyed, and were rebuilt and furnished within a few years of the great catastrophe, amongst them being the Brewers' Hall and the Stationers' Hall, the Mercers' Chapel, the House of the New River Company, and some others. These contain furniture dating from the latter half of the seventeenth century, which the reader should take an opportunity of examining if he can obtain the permission of the clerks of the companies to do so. The Master's chair of the Brewers' Hall, is massively carved and characteristic, showing the heavy swags of fruit and flowers which were coming into our English carvers' scheme of design at this time.

To the reign of Charles II belongs the introduction of Grinling Gibbons, who doubtless influenced our school of carving. Evelyn is said to have discovered him about 1670, and brought

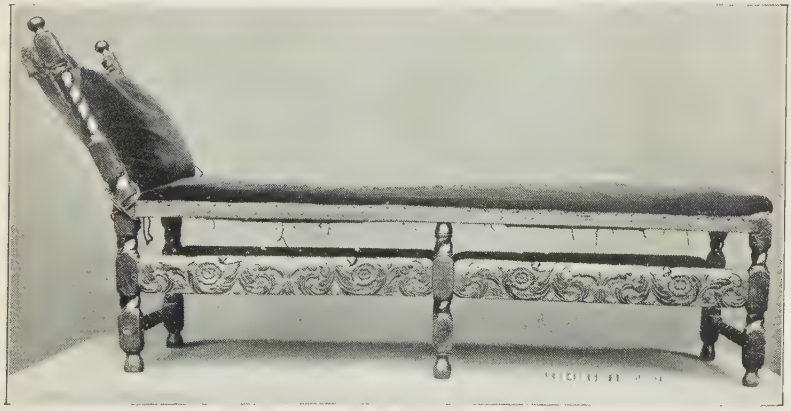
his work to the notice of the king, who gave him an appointment in the Office of Works, favoured him with orders for Windsor Castle, Hampton Court Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral, and other palaces and churches. Gibbons became the fashion, and with his pupils, Samuel Watson, a Derbyshire man, Drevot of Brussels, and Lawreans of Mechlin, carved and decorated the interiors of Chatsworth, Petworth, Burleigh, and many other country houses. Grinling Gibbons used pear-tree wood for his work, which nearly always consisted of groups of fruit and flowers very elaborately carved, with a great amount of undercutting and in full relief. It is a highly realistic kind of ornament and has great merit, but the difficulty of keeping such fragile work in a fair state of preservation is a great drawback, and, moreover, the most highly-carved panels are so elaborate that they seem somewhat out of place as part of the woodwork of a substantial building.

The reign of James II was too short to leave any particular record of change in the style of woodwork, and we are now approaching the time when the Dutch influence, which had already shown signs of power during the reign of Charles II, was to become more strikingly predominant when William III came to the throne.

Another very important factor, which has been noticed in the chapter on French furniture, was the importation from the West Indies and from America, of a great variety of woods available for the manufacture of ornamental marqueterie. Mahogany, although discovered, was not in general use until after the first quarter of the eighteenth century, but walnut was used largely in Holland,



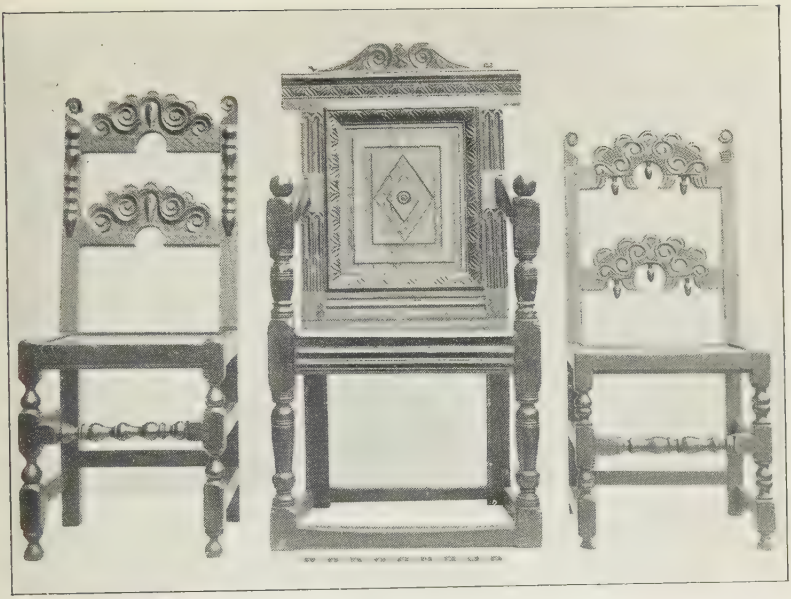
JACOBEAN CHAIRS IN CARVED WALNUT

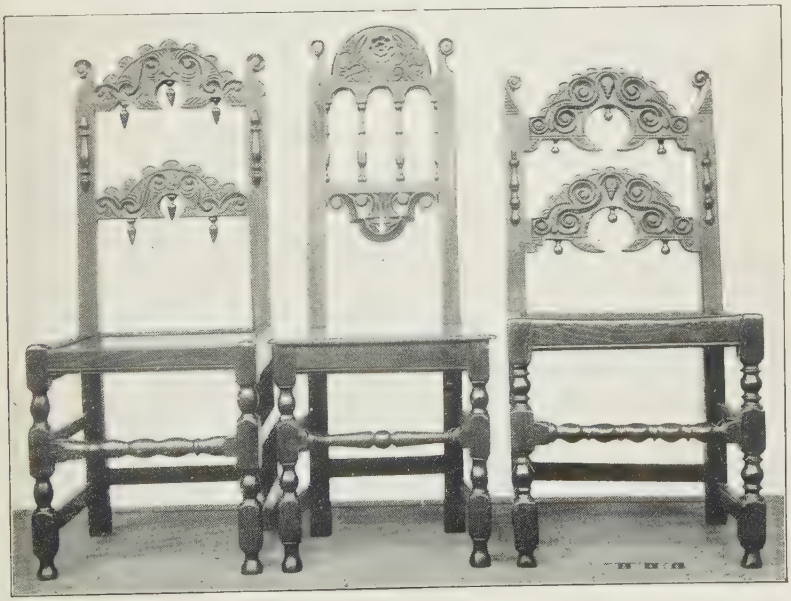


JACOBEAN SOFA IN CARVED OAK
LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

JACOBEAN CHAIR IN CARVED OAK
DATED 1640

JACOBEAN SIDE TABLE IN OAK
LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY





JACOBEAN CHAIRS IN OAK
LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

and furniture of this material was being brought over to England at the end of the seventeenth century.

Jacobean furniture other than that gilded or upholstered, was made of oak of English growth, tough in fibre and rich in figure. It was designed, as we have seen, in the earlier part of the century on severe and restrained lines, gradually increasing in ornament and comfort as the customs and habits of the people required, and as importations from other countries influenced our native craftsmen. Writers and connoisseurs are, however, agreed in regarding the English joiners' work of the seventeenth century as the best of its kind, good, honest work, which, owing to the quality of the oak and the sound principles of construction, will enable those who possess examples to hand them on to future generations. Besides the difference in the appearance of the oak itself, its grain and figure, which is so much better than the oak now imported from the Baltic and from America, there are signs of good Jacobean work missing from modern joinery unless placed there for the purposes of deception. Nearly all the mortise joins are riveted with oak pegs, the ends of which are generally to be seen where the tenon has been put into the mortise. The colour of good old Jacobean furniture should be of a rich warm tint, not the dead black of the modern so-called "antique" rubbish, but a fine surface obtained by the coating of beeswax and turpentine with which the wood was originally dressed, and to which two hundred years of rubbing and wear have given a fine surface, that can scarcely be imitated, and with which it is very important the amateur should make himself quite familiar.

It is also the period during which, as we have seen, richly upholstered furniture was made in England, velvet, tapestry and needlework being used. In addition to the chairs, sofas, and stools at Knole, there are some exceedingly handsome settees, originally carved and gilt, with beautiful velvet coverings, embroidered with the reversed "C" cypher of Charles II, to be seen at Holyrood Palace. They are in a dilapidated condition, but serve to show what handsome furniture of this kind was in use.

In Dalkeith Palace there is also some beautiful furniture of the Jacobean time. This place has a peculiar interest, because some of the best pieces were given by Charles II to his son, the Duke of Monmouth, and after his rebellion and execution, the house was built and furnished by his widow, who married into the Buccleuch family, and it has remained there ever since.

The illustrations from photographs of the collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, give an idea of the oak-work of this important period.

JACOBEAN CABINET IN OAK
QUEEN ANNE PERIOD

CHAPTER III

FRENCH FURNITURE

Change from Gothic to Renaissance—Furniture of Louis XIII period. Louis Quatorze—Public collections of French furniture of this period—Berain and Lebrun—André Charles Boulle, his work and methods—Boulle's successors—Reproductions by eminent makers, *première et contre partie*—Marqueterie of West Indian veneers, designs of Riesener—Chinese lacquer used for furniture. The Regency Period—Change in style and characteristic ornaments of the time. Louis Quinze—Change in French manners and customs—Caffieri and his work—The subjects of tapestry used for furniture—Introduction of lighter articles, and descriptions of them. Louis Seize and Marie Antoinette—Influence of the Queen—Change of fashion—Pierre Gouthière and his work—Vernis Martin—Style of panels and difference in treatment of interior decorations. The Directory—Changes brought about by the Revolution—Pseudo-classicalism of the period—The National Convention. The First Empire—Napoleon as Caesar—Introduction of Egyptian ornament—Characteristic features of furniture of the time—Massive carved and gilt chairs—Furniture subsequent to the time of Napoleon. Reproductions—Different kinds of reproductions of the best pieces—Remarks and suggestions.

IN France, as in other countries, the mediaeval period of art gave way to fifteenth-century Gothic. In such beautiful monuments of delicate tracery in stone-work as Rouen Cathedral, we can see to what perfection of design and intricate detail, the French architect and craftsman could manipulate the stone of Caen. The woodwork interiors, and such furniture of a movable kind as

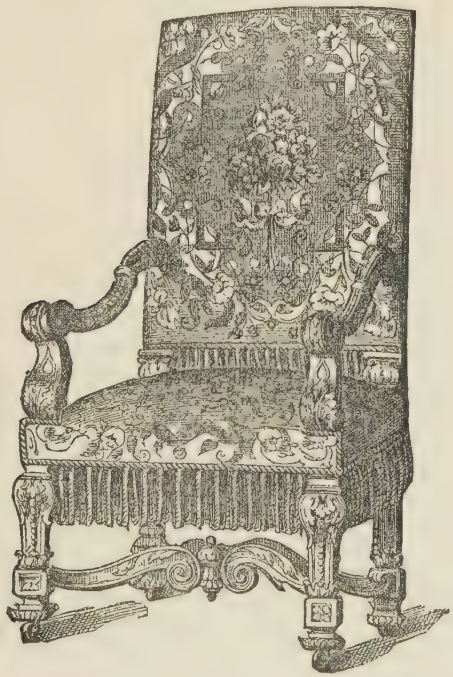
were in use in those early days, followed the lines of the stone-work, and French Gothic wood-carving was unsurpassed. Unfortunately very few examples remain after the lapse of nearly five hundred years, and it is only by studying such fragments of panels, mouldings and carved ornament, as are to be found in the collection of Emile Peyre, very wisely purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum a few years ago, that we can estimate the merit of wood-carving in France of the fifteenth century.

In the chapter on Renaissance furniture, some reference has been made to the great change that came about in Italy during the fifteenth century, and was carried to France during the reign of François Premier. During the lifetime of this king and his successors, the Renaissance movement in art, and particularly in stone and woodwork, held sway with varying taste, from pure to debased, but for the purpose of this handbook we can only give a rapid glance at this century of art progress, and hurry on to a time nearer our own, of which there are more examples preserved to us.

For those who would study the furniture of the French Renaissance, there are excellent works by able authors, and the Cluny Museum contains beautiful specimens of the best and also of the later periods. Besides those which are in such public collections, there are few pieces of really authentic furniture of this time to be found. Occasionally what appears to be an old buffet, chair, or credence comes to light, but a careful examination will generally reveal the fact, that, while a panel or a piece of carved ornament is of the period, the remainder has been made in the style of such a piece of fur-

niture as was evidently suggested by the genuine old fragments.

During the reign of Louis Treize, furniture became more comfortable, and there was more variety. The chairs were high-backed, and were, for the



ARMCHAIR IN TAPESTRY (EARLY LOUIS QUATORZE)

first time, made with arms; the legs and stretchers were visible and were of oak or walnut wood, the high backs and seats were covered with tapestry from the looms of Beauvais. There is a kind of marqueterie which we now identify with this period; it is rich in tone and full of design—the scheme of

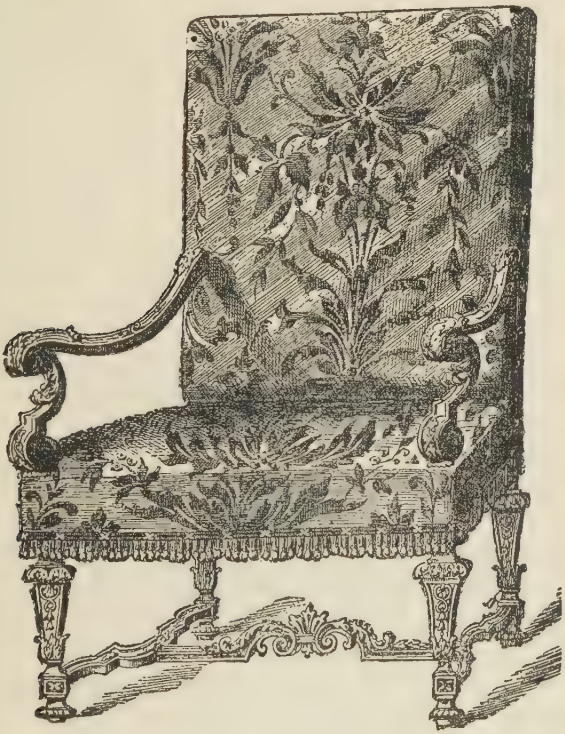
decoration being a number of panels or cartouches with baskets or bouquets of flowers in each panel; the mountings, if there be any, are of carved and gilt wood, instead of the cast and chased gilt bronze which came into fashion some fifty years later. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a cabinet of this style and period deserving careful attention.

Louis Quatorze

After Louis XIV came to the throne a new era may be said to have begun for French decorative art, and in the palaces of Versailles, the Louvre, the *Musée du Garde Meuble*, and in such collections as that lately given to the nation by Lady Wallace, and the Jones Bequest in South Kensington, we have proofs of the degree to which the manufacture of sumptuous and elegant furniture was carried. Under the superintendence of Colbert, the king's minister of finance, the most generous encouragement was given to artists and skilled craftsmen, and the making of gorgeous furniture was raised to the level of painting and sculpture. Orders were given for special designs, and cabinet makers were encouraged by royal patronage and favour, being honoured by such newly-coined titles as *Maître Ebeniste* and *Ebeniste au Roi*. Immense sums of money were expended to produce those magnificent examples of the cabinet maker's art and industry, justly entitled to the description *Meubles de luxe*.

Berain and Lebrun furnished the designs executed by André Charles Boulle, his sons and successors, and the kind of furniture identified with his name, but which has since become vulgarized and

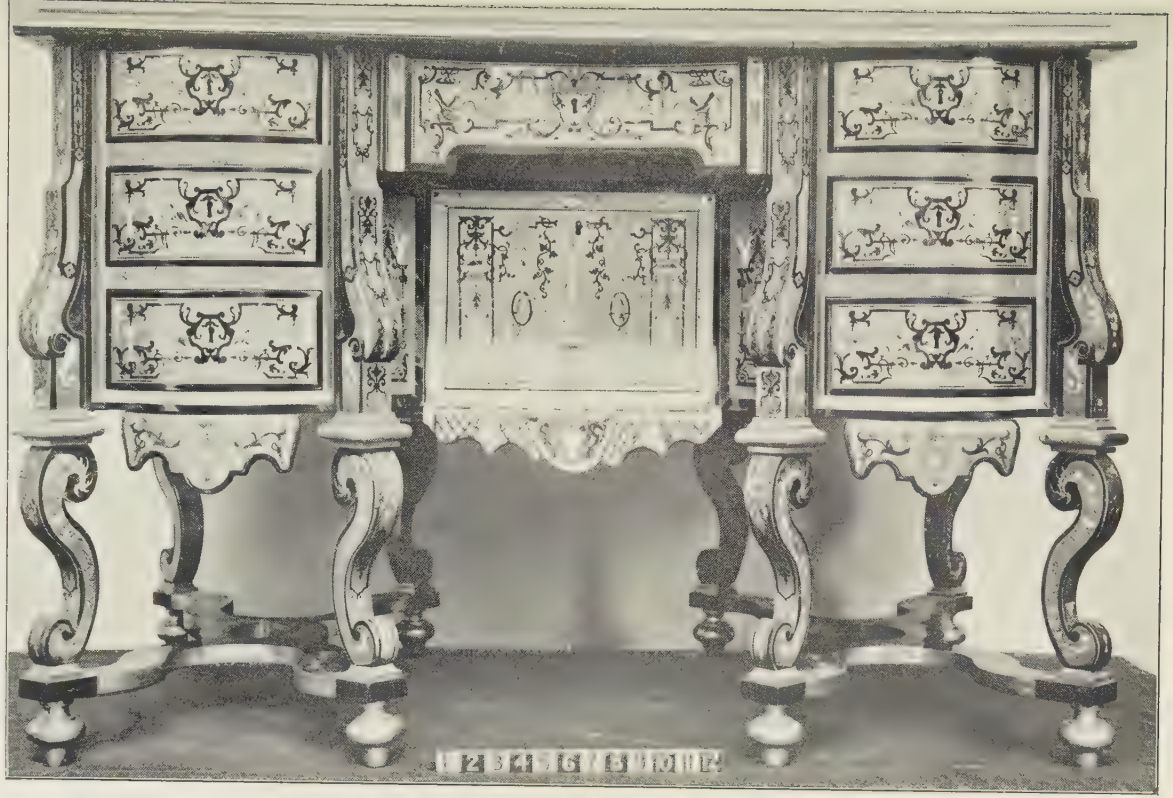
common, came into fashion. The process adopted by Boulle is pretty well known, but can scarcely be passed by without a word of explanation. The design was enlarged from the original drawing into



ARMCHAIR IN TAPESTRY (LOUIS QUATORZE)
A little later than the preceding illustration

a full-sized diagram, and then cut out in sheets of tortoise-shell and brass, prepared beforehand for the purpose. Such portions of the design as were intended to remain in brass were then eliminated from the sheet of tortoise-shell, and a similar plan

was adopted with the brass which it was intended to replace with tortoise-shell. The two sheets of different materials thus treated were then pressed into each other, much in the same way that we have seen children's puzzle pictures and maps, when the design of the paper picture of which the puzzle is a copy has been completed. A strong solution of glue was well brushed into the crevices between brass and shell; paper was then laid over the work, and it was allowed to get hard and dry. In a day or two the paper would be scraped off, and the Boulle work, which I should have mentioned had already been laid upon the foundation of the piece of furniture it was proposed to ornament, would be ready for scraping, rubbing down and polishing. The engraving of the surface thus prepared was a very important branch of the work; the design was, to use a technical term, "blind," until the deft hand of the artist-engraver gave it life. For an instance let us take the well-known design in old Boulle work which we call the "squirrel" pattern, because part of its ornament consists of that little animal represented in brass inlay. That portion of thin brass which is part of the sheet I have described, would simply represent the shape of the squirrel until a little shading, the indication of paws, tail, eye and other touches from the engraver's tool, here and there, had given the squirrel form and life. It is the same with each figure, each scroll and flower, so that it must be obvious that much of the merit and spirit of the work, depends upon the skill of the engraver. When this process was complete a black pigment like thick ink was rubbed into the lines made by the graver, which showed up all the details of the design, and this, having the dark shell



FRENCH KNEEHOLE TABLE BY ANDRÉ CHARLES BOULLE
(LOUIS QUATORZE)

as a background, made a rich picture. Boulle may be black, red or brown; sometimes pieces are enriched by panels of blue, and I have seen panels of green. These colours are produced by placing underneath the veneer, a colouring matter which shows through the transparent portions of the tortoise-shell, a material which everyone knows is partly opaque and partly transparent. Under the shell, which was intended to remain brown, gilding was sometimes introduced to heighten the effect. In the panels of a piece of furniture which the *ébeniste* intended to be more fanciful, he would sometimes insert a piece of horn, which, unlike the shaded effect of tortoiseshell, was wholly transparent; under this horn he would place a grayish blue colour, which would come as a relief to the black boulle and produce a very decorative effect.

The furniture made by Boulle in this manner was further ornamented by massive mountings of gilt bronze; some of the beautiful cabinets in the Louvre have figures in high relief, scrolls, birds, and ornamental mouldings standing out from the surface of the boulle work. The handles of the chests of drawers or commodes are massive and handsome. The reader will find the best productions of boulle in the Louvre "Galerie d'Apollon," in the Jones Bequest at South Kensington, and in the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, Manchester Square, London.

Long after Boulle and his sons and successors had passed away, and years after his work had gone out of fashion, a revival of the taste for this highly decorative furniture came about, and boulle-work, or buhl, as it is more generally written and pronounced, was made by several firms in London

and Paris. Of course, save for the fact that the process invented by the originator has been adopted, there is not much real similarity between a showy buhl table made in London or Paris, and sold for from fifteen to thirty pounds, and the magnificent boulle armoire in the Jones Bequest, which cost that collector about £5,000.

Quite apart from this modern and cheaper class of buhl there are reproductions of the fine old pieces made in Paris by such first-class makers as Zwiener, Beurdelet, Dasson, and one or two others; these are really on the lines of the old work, well made and of fine finish, and worth purchasing by those who admire the style, but are unable or unwilling to pay enormous prices for what are practically museum specimens.

More will be said presently about these first-class reproductions of museum specimens, but before dismissing Boulle work I will explain a little matter which often puzzles amateurs.

When the sheets of shell and brass are cut and, as already explained, certain portions of each material are withdrawn, so that the designs may be completed in the respective proportions of each material which were arranged in the original drawing, these deleted pieces of brass and shell remain over as a surplus. In some instances these were discarded altogether, and sold to smaller makers; in the majority of cases they were used for the side panels of a cabinet, where they would not be so much *en évidence*, or they were made up into a piece of furniture corresponding in form to the original piece, but the relative portions of the design would be exactly the reverse of the original—where was brass would now be shell, and *vice versâ*.

This kind of buhl was called *contre partie*, sometimes by English cabinet makers I have heard the two parts called "positive" and "negative," or distinguished as "male" and "female"; and I remember a very amusing incident in which a lady asked me for the explanation of the puzzling remark which a certain connoisseur colonel, a friend of hers, had made, by telling her that her buhl card table was only the "feminine" kind. Of course this kind of buhl, which the French more appropriately term the *contre partie*, is of much less value than the *première partie*, or first selection of the cut sheets of the design.

The importation of different choice woods from the West Indies no doubt encouraged the production of marqueterie furniture. A rich dark West Indian wood, something like Rosewood, darker than mahogany, was called *bois du roi*, or "Kingwood," because it was favoured by the king. A yellowish and striped veneer was called "tulip" wood because its pretty variegated appearance somewhat resembled the colours of the common tulip. Holly-tree wood stained different colours, Citron, Coromandel, Brazil, Zebra wood, Sandal, and other fancy and variegated veneers, were used to give colour and variety to the marqueterie enrichment of the furniture of the time.

The designs were numerous and diverse; sometimes the veneers of the same wood were placed different ways of the grain or figure, so that the four sections of a panel would have the figure pointing towards the centre, the outer edge of the panel being banded by a different, generally a darker wood, with a key pattern or other design as a framework. The panel would sometimes

contain a trophy of musical instruments, a basket of flowers, or a landscape. Riesener, one of the first *ébenistes* of the time of Louis XV and his successor, affected a box-pattern marqueterie as a groundwork of some of his pieces. He also made some of his beautiful cabinets in three compartments, the centre one slightly projecting and having a panel inlaid with a vase of flowers, while the side compartments slightly receded and were ornamented by the lozenge-shaped squares or diamonds which were a favourite form of decoration with him.

Lacquered panels and boxes had been brought from China and Japan by collectors and merchants; these were taken to pieces and parts mounted into the furniture of the period, but as there was considerable difficulty in procuring the lacquer from Tonking or Fouchow, the clever French craftsman was not long before he contrived to produce a similar article, and this he used in the panels of his tables, secretaires, and commodes. Mounting in gilt bronze completed the ornamental enrichment of the furniture of the Louis Quatorze period. These mounts are of dignified and restrained designs; the broken scroll is a characteristic ornament, the curves are graceful, and generally the work is stately and massive; slabs of rare marbles and of Egyptian porphyry surmounted some of the sumptuous pieces.

The Regency Period

After the death of the *Grand Monarque*, as Louis XIV was called, a style for decoration and furniture came into vogue termed *l'époque de la Régence.* It marks a change which took place during

the infancy of the grandson of the late king, the curves and scrolls are more free, and a characteristic form of ornamentation is the frequent introduction of the heads and busts of women with the head-dress of the period, made in gilt bronze, and enriching the marqueterie commodes, tables and cabinets of the time.

Louis Quinze

About this period, and during the reign of Louis XV the manners and customs of the French aristocracy underwent a change; it was the age of the Boudoir rather than of the *Salon de Réception*, with smaller rooms, in which people lived and talked, and naturally there was smaller and less cumbrous furniture. The family of Martin made their famous *Vernis Martin* panels, enriching the more fanciful furniture of the period, metal mountings became more ornate and highly chased and finished, and towards the latter part of the reign decoration and wood-work became rococo and over-ornate, and design, which in the time of Louis Quatorze had been dignified, became debased by redundant and excessive ornament, a salient feature being the conventionalized curled endive.

Caffieri was the most famous mounter in bronze of this period, and was largely employed by King and Court. His designs were quaint, but somewhat rococo, introducing the Chinese mandarin and dragon, the pagoda and other eccentricities into his scheme of ornamentation. Monkeys playing with a skipping rope, and other odd and curious conceptions, gave to his designs a fanciful and grotesque effect, but possessing great merit by

reason of the vigour and spirit of the work. Any piece of furniture mounted by Caffieri now realizes an enormous price, but copies of his designs, with the exception of those made by first-class makers, lack all the merits of his original work, and are only frivolous and rococo pieces of metal enrichment, appealing to those who like plenty of ornament, but are not too critical as to its quality.

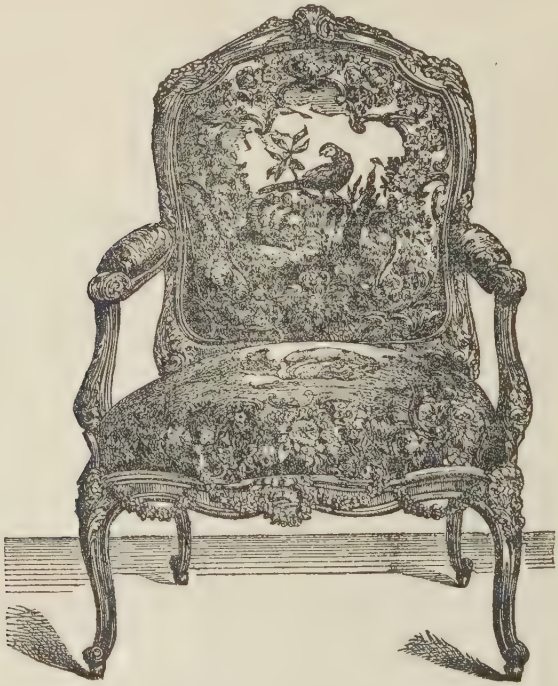
As the habits of French society became more social and less formal, the fashion of furniture followed suit. Instead of the stately *fauteuil* of Louis Quatorze, we have the word *chaise* as a diminutive of *chaire* coming into vogue, and in place of the tapestry covering of Beauvais, with representations of a boar hunt or the chase, we have the looms of Aubusson or of Gobelins, furnishing the smaller and more domestic subjects for tapestry coverings. La Fontaine's fables, bouquets of flowers, representations of courtly gentlemen and charming ladies conversing or dancing, are the subjects for the *chaises*, the *fauteuils*, the *canapés*, and *bergères* of the period. The *canapé* was a sofa or settee large enough to hold three persons, as distinct from the *causeuse*, which only accommodated two. The *bonheur du jour*, a little cabinet table suitable for a lady's room, came in about this time. The *cartonnière*, a table with an arrangement for the storage of papers; the *escritoire* of a lighter description than formerly, the *chaise-longue*, and other useful and decorative articles were made during this reign. Our own comfortable English sofa, the "Chesterfield," has no counterpart in French furniture; and the *chaise-longue* is the nearest approach to a lounge.

The *canapé*, or French sofa, is by no means a

FRENCH COMMODE, PROBABLY BY CRESSENT, WITH FINE GILT MOUNTS
LOUIS QUINZE

A CANAPÉ OR SOFA OF LOUIS XV PERIOD, CARVED AND GILT FRAME, WITH AUBUSSON TAPESTRY

luxurious seat, being to all intents and purposes an upholstered settee, which, however beautiful and valuable its tapestry covering, would not rest the tired owner, like our own English sofa.



FAUTEUIL OF LOUIS XV PERIOD, CARVED AND GILT FRAME COVERED WITH AUBUSSON TAPESTRY

A French suite of furniture of this period comprised the *canapé*, two or four *fauteuils* or armchairs, and four or six single chairs, or *chaises*. The accessory furniture would be the above-mentioned *chaise-longue*, a pair of *bergères*, which were easy chairs with padded arms, and perhaps some elegant footstools with carved and gilt frames.

FRENCH OCCASIONAL TABLES WITH GILT MOUNTS
LOUIS SEIZE

Louis Seize and Marie Antoinette

It is not until the beautiful bride of the Dauphin, Marie Antoinette, had made her influence a power

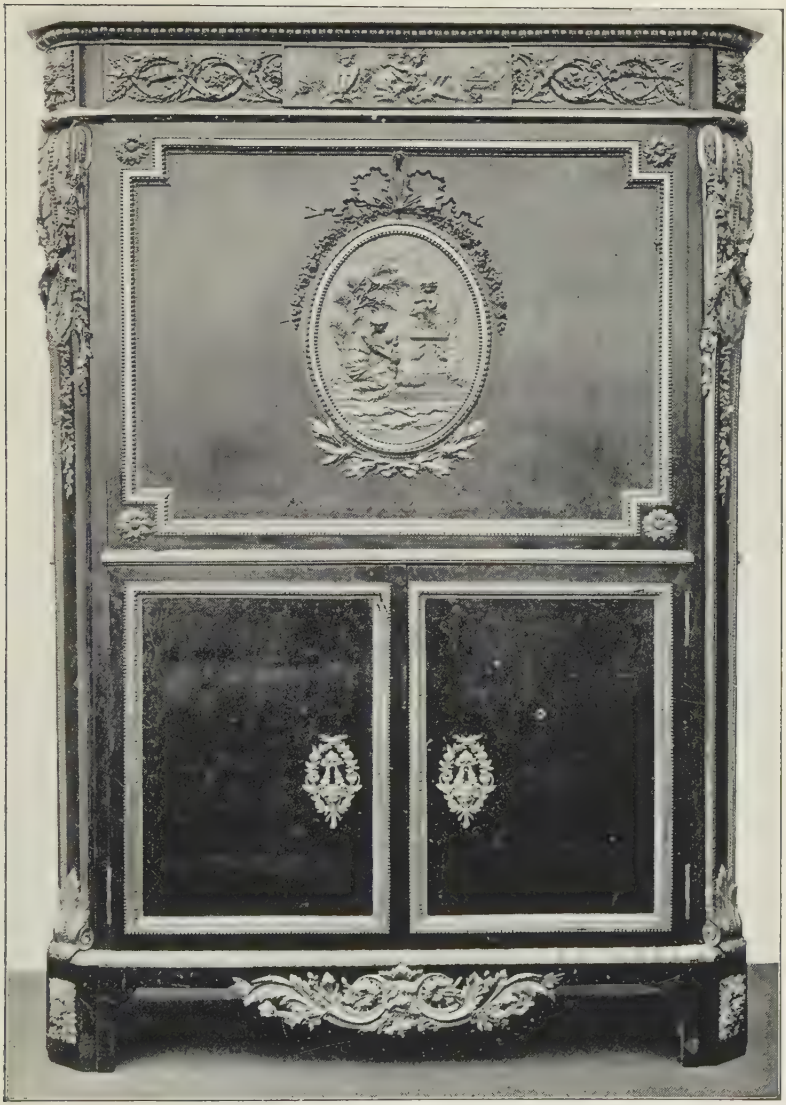
FAUTEUIL OF LOUIS XVI PERIOD, CARVED AND GILT FRAME WITH AUBUSSON TAPESTRY

over fashion, that the taste for the frivolity and excess of ornamentation was checked. A severer tone was made to prevail in matters of taste, in dress, in decoration and in furniture. The *cabriole*

or scroll-formed leg was gradually abandoned in favour of the straight and tapering support of chair, table and cabinet. Plain mahogany with simple flutings ornamented with husks, or white painted furniture relieved by gilding, came into vogue. Sometimes the simplicity of design and material was compensated by lavish expenditure of time and skill in the details of the beautiful gilt bronze mountings which have made the *Meubles de luxe* of this time so remarkable.

Pierre Gouthière was the most famous mounter of this reign, as was Caffieri of the preceding one, and he has left us some of the most beautiful pieces of furniture that the world possesses. Three of the most remarkable examples of this master were sold in 1882 at the famous Hamilton Palace sale for about £30,000.

The Vernis Martin panels of the time of Marie Antoinette, were decorated by and after Pater, instead of the cupids and nymphs by Boucher which had pleased the fancy of Mesdames du Barri and Pompadour. The small round table, the *guéridon*, the little work table, and more dainty and better designed furniture became the rage. Sèvres china plaques were used to enrich the secretaires and cabinets of the best makers. The panelling of rooms, the chimney-pieces, cornices and mouldings were simple, a riband and a rose entwined, or a trophy formed of Hymen's torches bound by a garland of roses; pilasters, flat and fluted, with husks as ornaments in the flutings; panels, either square or having what is termed by architects a "broken corner," with a round patera where the corner of the panel is so broken; these are all features of the *boiseries*, or panelled interiors, which



FRENCH UPRIGHT ESCRITOIRE, MOUNTED BY GOUTHIÈRE
TIME OF LOUIS SEIZE

FRENCH FAUTEUILS, CARVED AND GILT FRAMES WITH AUBUSSON TAPESTRY
LOUIS SEIZE

FRENCH MARQUETERIE COMMODE BY RIESENER
LOUIS SEIZE

were the fashion of the day, replacing the lavish use of the rococo scroll, and the curled endive ornament of the latter part of the Louis XV period.

The Directory

A great deal might be written about the beautiful furniture of Marie Antoinette's time, and in my "Illustrated History of Furniture" I have devoted more space to this important period of French industrial art; but for the purposes of this slight review we must press on.

The great Revolution brought about a change in the style of furniture as in everything else. Between the period of those terrible tragedies which marked this great historical catastrophe and that of the First Empire, there was a period known as the *Directoire.* The style of this time was marked by a mixture of the lines of the period which had just passed away, and an affectation of the classicalism of ancient Rome. We find *torchères* of tripod form with a serpent coiling round the centre support; clocks and candelabra the supports of which are seated griffins; the same mystic emblem of an old world mythology serves as the support of a table, and Caryatides figures stiff in posture, form the pilasters of cabinets. These are some of the characteristic ornaments of this period of taste.

The plainer or more domestic furniture of simple mahogany, or of white painted wood, was not materially altered from the Louis Seize designs; the metal mounts, if any, would be a little more stiff and formal, but they would scarcely be distinguishable from those of the previous style, unless

marked by some detail which showed this classic influence. The reader will remember that the years were renumbered and the months renamed by the National Convention, which was to destroy monarchies and set up republics in their place. Naturally we find some evidence of this pseudo-classicalism in the decoration and furniture of the short life of Directory government.

A FIRST EMPIRE CHAIR

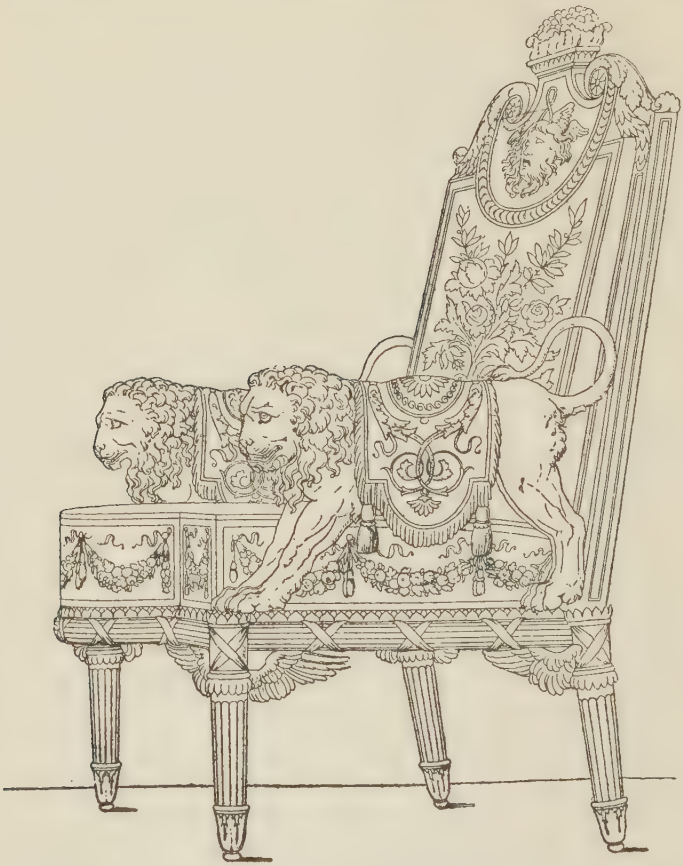
The First Empire

Then followed the Napoleonic period. As first Consul and afterwards as Emperor, Napoleon I loved to pose as Caesar; his portraits by Canova in marble represent him as a Roman Emperor crowned with a garland of bay leaves; and in war and politics the rôle of a Roman conqueror seems to have possessed him. The imperial stamp is on

FRENCH CHAIR AND SOFA OF THE FIRST EMPIRE PERIOD

everything, and we find the idea of copying the models and shapes of antique Greece and Rome developed and more pronounced than during his consulate. In 1798 Buonaparte, as the general of the Directory, had fought the battle of the Pyramids, and this gives us a date for the introduction of the sphinx and other Egyptian ornaments into French decorative art; later on we find this Egyptian influence, together with the Greek and Roman ornament, paramount. Stiff-winged figures holding garlands of victory, their feet close together like those of the Egyptian bronzes; animals' feet adapted to ornament the legs of chairs and tables; the conventionalized honeysuckle ornament, which originated in Egypt and was adopted by Greece, used as a frieze for table or cabinet; these are all favourite decorative emblems of this time. The furniture itself was generally made of simple but richly-figured Spanish mahogany, stiff in form and classic in type; mahogany columns formed the legs of tables, and had capitals and bases of gilt bronze. Stiffly-draped figures of Terpsichore or her sister Muses, winged female figures, garlands, chariots of Roman conquerors or eagles, Roman fasces, griffins or sphinxes were salient ornaments. Lions' heads formed the handles and their feet adorned the bases of furniture. Whatever difficulty there may be in deciding between some of the earlier styles, there need not be much hesitation in assigning French furniture of this type to that of the late time of the Directory or to that of the First Empire. There is one great merit that this rather aggressive kind of furniture possesses, and that is the excellent quality of the work itself: cabinet work, chasing, gilding, all are good of their kind. The more

ordinary and domestic furniture followed the lines of the richer descriptions. Instead of the mounts



A MASSIVE CARVED AND GILT CHAIR OF THE FIRST EMPIRE, DESIGNED BY LECONTE

being many and rich, they were fewer and less ornate, sometimes made of carved wood instead of metal, and painted a colour to imitate green bronze.

The coverings of the chairs and sofas of the period corresponded, and carpets, curtains, and also the decoration of walls and ceilings. Red, green and yellow silks embroidered or woven with wreaths, lyres, or the conventionalized honeysuckle in silver and gold were suitable for the richer kinds of seats.

The carved and gilt furniture was particularly splendid, and some of the massive throne-like chairs we still occasionally find, seem to remind us of a triumphant Maréchal of France during Napoleon's successful campaigns.

The Palace of Fontainebleau, about forty miles from Paris, is very rich in specimens of the best kind of Empire furniture, it was furnished by Napoleon in the days of his prosperity.

Since the First Empire there has been no pronounced style in French furniture. As fashion has changed it has been the mode to reproduce Henri Deux or Louis Quatorze, Louis Quinze or Louis Seize. Military expeditions and conquests have, from time to time, left their mark, as when the Tonking campaign caused the revival of a taste for Chinese models and shapes for furniture. Blackwood cabinets, tables and chairs were inlaid with mother-of-pearl and carved with fantastic designs; and later on there was an Algerian and Tunisian influence on some of the more fanciful articles of furniture, but the different epochs of taste which I have briefly referred to in this chapter are those which are the classic styles for French furniture and decoration.

Reproductions

The almost fabulous prices which within the last quarter of a century have been given for genuine

examples of the best kinds of French furniture of the different styles reviewed in this chapter, have caused a great demand for copies and reproductions, and I now propose to add some notes about these. They may be roughly divided into three classes: 1. Those made to deceive the purchaser and to be passed off as genuine; 2. Those which are ordinary reproductions of furniture of the style; and, 3, Reproductions by the first *ébenistes* or cabinet makers and bronze artists of Paris, made not for the purpose of deception, but produced either in the execution of orders from wealthy amateurs, who want exact replicas of the finest specimens, which, being national property, cannot be purchased; or else as *tours de force* for the purpose of exhibition, or for sale to those who, unwilling or unable to pay several thousand pounds for a bureau or a commode of the epoch, are yet willing to give some two or three hundred pounds for a well-made piece of the best workmanship, correct in every detail as to design and faithfully reproduced from the original.

In the chapter on "faked" furniture I have said something about the first-named kind of reproduction, and in the last chapter of this book, containing some hints and cautions to the collector, I have added some remarks. With regard to the second class, they might again be subdivided into good, bad, and indifferent. If the reader wishes to have decorative furniture of the style he prefers, he must use his discretion in endeavouring to select that which is least pretentious, the nearest to the original, and that which is most free from the meretricious showy splendour which renders the cheaper kinds of imitations of good old French furniture so ob-

jectionable. It is quite possible to purchase for very moderate sums, good honest furniture with the graceful lines and curves of the Louis XV style, or the simpler modesty of the more severe Marie Antoinette period, but the selection should be made from those not too generously mounted or too lavishly inlaid.

It is about the third class that I feel I may be doing my reader some service in offering advice. Some of the reproductions of Boulle's work, of the cabinets and tables by Riesener, David Roentgen, Pasquier, Carlin, Leleu, Cressent, and others (a fairly complete list of whom has been given in my "History of Furniture"), are really works of art. If the reader has the means to buy, and the kind of house which will accommodate such beautiful specimens of the cabinet-maker's art, I would recommend them as an excellent investment of capital. They have been made by such masters as I have named earlier in this chapter, and neither pains nor expense have been spared to produce the best results. As time goes on and highly-skilled labour becomes more and more costly, such pieces as I am referring to will acquire a much greater value, especially as, if carefully preserved, they are allowed to acquire the improved tone that time gives to well gilt bronze and fine marqueterie.

Many of these rich pieces are only suitable for large mansions, since they have been copied from the originals intended for the salons of the kings, or their ministers and favourites, but some are of smaller and more modest proportions, and are excellent and most desirable acquisitions. They can only be found in the hands of the chief dealers,

as they are necessarily costly, but they can be obtained at a fair price, and to my mind are much cheaper than the commoner copies produced in great quantities and sold for small sums.

CHAPTER IV

ITALIAN FURNITURE

The Renaissance influence—Rome and Naples—Roman mosaic—Florentine work—Marble mosaic, *pietra dura*, marble in "set" patterns—Venetian influence and work—Venetian glass, carving and gilding, figure work and methods of enrichment—Milanese cabinet work and inlay—Ebony and ivory furniture, Certosina work—La Certosa di Pavia—The influence of Pompeii on French and English design—Marqueterie furniture—General character of Italian furniture—Methods of gilding—Reproductions of the past twenty years—Italian Exhibitions.

IN the chapter on furniture of the Renaissance it has been shown how, towards the end of the fifteenth century, a radical change came over Italian design, subsequently influencing in turn the designers and manufacturers of every European country, and I have attempted, in the case of French, Flemish, and English furniture, to give some description of the way in which each country adopted this new force from Italy, and then afterwards developed its own traditions under the influences of local personalities and special circumstances.

The present short chapter will deal more in detail with the furniture of Italy itself, and in doing so it should be borne in mind that, although in the earlier centuries for Italy one might almost write Rome, this is by no means the case with the Italy of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and subsequent centuries.

The Gothic taste predominant in Germany, England and France, until it was gradually superseded by the Renaissance, was never a Roman style, although in other parts of Italy it reigned supreme in the carved-wood furnishings of cathedrals and churches, and also in the very limited furniture of the palace.

Rome and Naples

There is little to help us to determine what was the style of domestic furniture in Rome, but it would appear that both in the Empire City and in Naples, the designs of everything of an ornamental character had developed from the antique Greek forms adopted by the early Romans; then to a mixture of Classic with Byzantine, and afterwards to Renaissance. The Museum specimens preserved to us of these early times, are such as show these changes. The chairs of Dagobert, of St. Peter in Rome, and, later, of the tripods, lampstands, bedsteads and couches from Pompeii, still in the museum of Naples, all corroborate this view, and one can only imagine that the more ordinary furniture followed similar lines in more modest and less costly materials and workmanship. Mosaic work in marble had been in vogue from the period of ancient Greek art, and there are many specimens in the Naples Museum. That particular kind of marble enrichment which we now recognize as Roman mosaic, differs from the Florentine variety, inasmuch as the design of the former is composed of infinitesimal portions of the material made into a pattern, the divisions between the tiny particles being so fine that they can only be noticed by the

aid of a magnifying glass. In the Florentine work noticed presently, the design is made up of much larger pieces of marble, and is bolder and more effective. Both kinds of mosaic were applied to furniture.

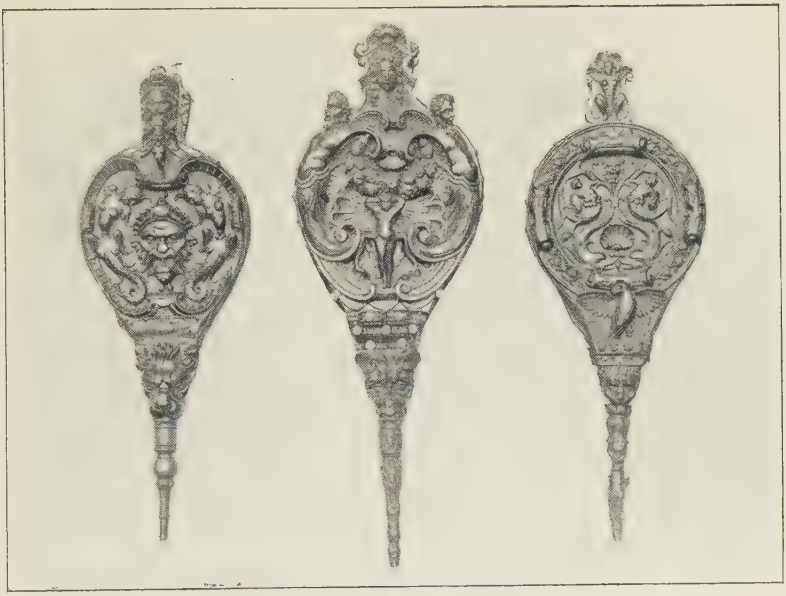
Florence

As the seventeenth century advanced, we find a school of decoration in vogue that is termed Florentine, and in all probability the kind of marble mosaic work which is so well known as Florentine, originated in the city of the Medici. When the famous collection of Hamilton Palace was sold in 1882, there were several examples of this gorgeous and over-decorated furniture, in which plaques of marble formed the fronts of doors or drawers, and columns of lapis lazuli supported the cornices, so that there was little wood to be seen; metal frames inclosed the mosaic plaques, metal-chased capitals and bases finished the columns, and the whole effect was exceedingly rich and handsome. A favourite design of this inlaid marble was a bird on a sprig, or some fruit or flowers, generally in a panel. From this kind of mosaic work with a flat surface, the designers of Italian furniture developed the enrichment of their cabinets by another method of ornamentation in marble and stone, known by the name of *pietra dura*, in which different descriptions of agates and cornelians, marbles and coloured stones, were cut and arranged in such designs as a vase holding fruit and flowers, or the bouquet or group of blossoms without the vase. This *pietra dura* work was in high relief on the panels of the cabinet, and gave a sumptuous effect to the piece of furniture. Marbles cut into small

shaped pieces were also prepared by being ground to the substance of veneers and used to ornament the frames of chairs in patterns more or less geometrical, so that only sufficient of the black wood or ebony was visible, as sufficed for a framework of the marble. The same taste provided slabs of this marble mosaic for the tops of large centre tables and for consoles and occasional tables. It was against the canons of good taste, for surely such combinations of wood and marble could never be quite satisfactory, and, like all such crazes and fashions, it has had its day. When occasionally furniture of this kind comes into the market, the price which it realizes is small compared with its great costliness.

Venice

Venice, too, may be said to have had a particular school of its own. The merchants of this important commercial city were in the sixteenth century trading extensively with the East, and the rich textiles they imported were admirably suited for covering carved and gilt furniture. In some of the sumptuous furniture at Knole, and in the rather dilapidated settees which are still to be seen at Holyrood Palace, also in the Duke of Buccleuch's Palace of Dalkeith, and other mansions containing seventeenth-century furniture, one can trace the influence of Venetian carving and gilding in the X-frame chairs and stools, covered in costly materials which either came from the Levant or from the looms of Genoa, Venice, and other manufacturing Italian or Flemish cities. Venice, too, was the great centre of ornamental glass manufacture, the glass



VENETIAN CARVED BELLOWS IN WALNUT
LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

VENETIAN CHAIRS AND STOOL
LATER SIXTEENTH CENTURY

makers of Murano were the possessors of valued and coveted secrets for producing the most beautiful and delicate polychromatic glass, and this was made into mirror frames, chandeliers and candelabra. As the century advanced the old-fashioned reflecting portion of the mirror, which had formerly been made of polished metal, came to be of silvered glass, and when, later on, these plates were able to be produced in larger sizes, they required carved and gilt frames to hold and embellish them. Decoration by engraving the centres and borders of the more ornamental class of mirrors, was also a Venetian invention, the design engraved being fitted with a block and silvered by a process which produced a "frosted silver" effect, and made a telling relief to the rest of the mirror, silvered in the ordinary manner. Frames became more fanciful and rococo; eccentric designs, with the heads and bodies of mermaids, tritons, and grotesques, terminating in foliated scrolls, are characteristic features of Venetian ornament of the seventeenth century.

Figure carving of the Venetian school has always been free and vigorous, the supports for console tables, the *torchères* or lamp-holders of the late sixteenth and of the following century, gave the wood-carver ample scope for his skill. Sometimes a male or female figure holds a scroll-formed support, or a couple of amorini in playful combination with scrolls, perform a similar duty. Walnut wood was in much favour, but willow, lime, and sycamore were extensively used, and when the work was to be gilt, the softer texture of these woods allowed the carver more freedom.

Another characteristic Venetian production of

the seventeenth century was that of the richly-decorated negro figures, modern copies of which we have been familiarized with at recent Italian exhibitions. Doubtless the idea was taken from the antique busts at the Vatican, and in many other public and private collections, where the head of the figure is of one marble, black, of course, if the bust be that of a negro, and the draperies are formed of such variegated and rich marbles as Siena, Breccia, or other suitable varieties.

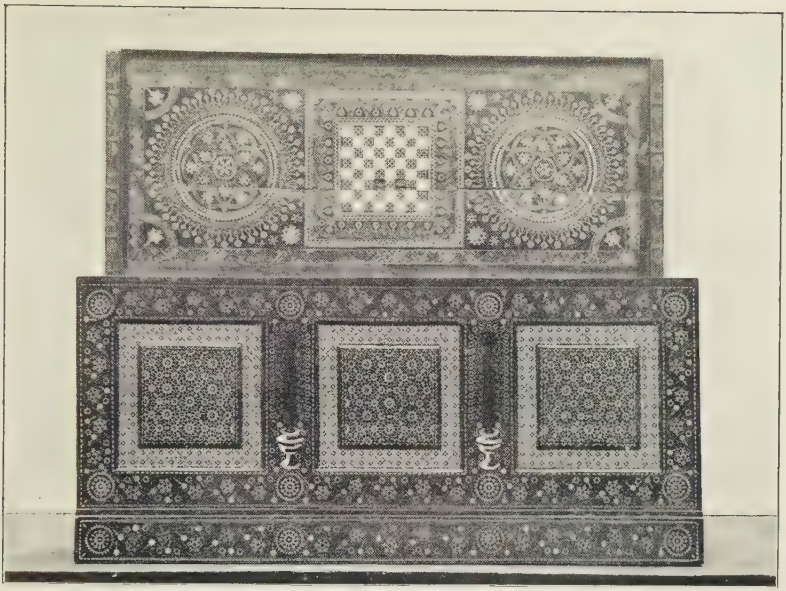
The Venetian negro figure was of two kinds, one having the head, arms and legs in black, and the draperies of polished walnut, while the more highly-decorative ones had the Eastern costume of the negro page slightly carved on the surface, to represent the pattern of the material of his costume, and this was picked out in vivid reds, blues and greens, further enriched by gilding.

The old carved *cassoni* alluded to in the chapter on Renaissance, the elaborate bellows and buffets and other furniture usually made of walnut wood and decorated by figure carving, are all generally recognized as the work of Venice of the seventeenth century.

Milan

It is somewhat difficult to know to which particular city one should attribute the decorative cabinet work in which carved and inlaid ivory, with ebony or black or brown wood as a background, forms the characteristic combination. This description is well known to those who take an interest in Italian furniture.

The collector or traveller of thirty or forty years



MILANESE COFFER INLAID WITH IVORY (CERTOSINA WORK)
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ITALIAN CHAIRS CARVED IN WALNUT
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

ago will remember the manufactory of Arrigoni in Milan, where so much furniture of this kind was produced, and perhaps it is not too much to assume that just as Guggenheim, Rietti and Richetti in Venice have within the last thirty or forty years reproduced the carved and gilt Venetian furniture of the two previous centuries, so in a similar way were Arrigoni and his contemporaries continuing the old traditions of the Milanese furniture designer and maker. If this supposition be correct, it is then to Milan that we may give the credit of the ebony and ivory furniture once so fashionable in Europe, but the taste for which has now almost vanished. Chairs, tables, cabinets of Renaissance form made of "ebonized" wood, and the older and better ones veneered with real ebony, had inlaid plaques of ivory engraved with figure subjects representing some of the classical battle scenes, or friezes from famous palaces or temples. When the plaques were too small for such subjects, less ambitious designs would decorate them, and other panels of ivory inlay, in which cupids and grotesques with scrolls, combined in the manner of the free Italian school, would more or less cover the plain surfaces of the pieces of furniture. Instead of inlaying the ivory, some of the richer cabinets of this description had the scrolls and figure carving in that material laid on to the ebony or ebonized wood in high relief, the subsidiary ornament being inlaid with ivory lines and scrolls.

Besides the Italian reproductions of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century work of this character, the English firm of Jackson and Graham made a reputation about thirty years ago by producing this black and white furniture, perhaps less

free than the originals from which they took their idea, but infinitely better constructed than the Italian work.

A different kind of inlay called "Certosina" work was also made at Milan both in the seventeenth century and much later—brown walnut enriched by having geometrical designs of small pieces of ivory or bone let in. The word "Certosina" is said to be derived from the name of the religious Order, the Carthusians, and the work of this kind was executed with great skill by the monks of that Order. There are still at Pavia in the screen of the high altar at the Certosa di Pavia, excellent examples of this early work.

Marqueterie

Although in drawing attention to some of the salient features of Italian furniture of a decorative character made in the seventeenth century and later, the special work of Florence, Venice, and Milan has been particularized, it should of course be understood that these were only local influences on the general character of Italian work in many other cities. Mr. Hungerford Pollen attributes to the excavation of Pompeii the pseudo classic designs which were prevalent, at first in France and afterwards in England during the first years of the nineteenth century, the kind of furniture described in the latter part of the chapter on French furniture and in that of England of a contemporary time. In such a manner does the fashion of one country act and react upon that of another.

The marqueterie furniture of Italy differs from

that of France, Holland, or England. The earliest work was the inlay of small pieces of ivory or a single coloured wood in geometrical pattern; subsequently this gave way to more complicated and varied designs, but Italian marqueterie was never developed to anything approaching the extent to which it was carried by the great French *ébenistes* during the reigns of Louis XV and XVI. The veneers employed were few in number, and the whole character of the work was much simpler. As a rule the shapes of the commodes are severe, that is, straight-fronted and without mounts, but when not straight they have bevelled sides, as distinct from the *bombé* forms of the French commodes of the Louis XV period.

Figures and landscapes were sometimes rendered in marqueterie, but generally enclosed in a cartouche. Sometimes the top of a table or chest of drawers would be ornamented by round or shaped panels, divided from the groundwork by lines, and inside the lines scrolls with figures of cupids were inlaid. A reddish-coloured veneer was fashionable in the early part of the eighteenth century, and marqueterie commodes of quite plain box-like form, mounted on four short square tapering feet, are attributed to a maker named Maggiolini.

Some of the more ambitious Renaissance cabinets of the seventeenth century, already alluded to in the first chapter of this book, were veneered with tortoise-shell and enriched with brass and mother-of-pearl. The stands and the framework of the cabinets were generally of ebony or ebonized wood. The elaborate interiors of these have been described.

Decoration of furniture by painting was also an

Italian fashion, and a pale green relieved by paintings of flowers and scrolls was a favourite method of enrichment.

General Remarks

Speaking generally of the furniture of Italy, there are one or two points to be noticed in conclusion. The palace of the Italian nobleman was large and commodious, as distinct from cosy, comfortable and homelike. The walls of the spacious and lofty rooms were hung with richly-decorated leather, tapestry or old damask, and the chairs, tables, chests and cabinets which furnished them were on a large scale, more adapted for receptions and for effect, than for social intercourse and what may be termed fireside comfort. The climate of Italy, the life of the owner of the "palazzo," were all in the direction of "show" furniture, which is not adapted for the use of English people who have not large country houses for its suitable display.

The methods of Italian gilding may be glanced at in passing; by the use of a rather thick preparation, in which red lead was an ingredient, a great deal of burnish in the gold was rendered possible, and when in course of time some of the gilding wears off, the signs of this red preparation showing through the gold leaf, give a rich tone of colour to Italian gilt woodwork, more artistic than when the gilding is quite fresh; in fact, the highly-burnished surface of unworn Italian gilding is somewhat garish and aggressive.

Modern Reproductions

Within the past twenty years or so the modern reproductions of Italian furniture have shown a

great deterioration from those made in Venice, Milan and Florence previously. Every critical visitor to an Earl's Court exhibition must have been struck by the quantity of ill-constructed, over-carved, and flimsy work sent over to minister to the taste for cheap display which unfortunately so many Englishmen are inclined to indulge in, and the result has been to bring Italian furniture into disrepute. The so-called "walnut" is often only stained white wood, and the cabinet work, never in the best days equal to the ornamental exteriors, has become worse and worse, until the reproduction is but a parody of the old Renaissance design it is supposed to represent, when the lines of a cassone showed the intention of the artist's mind, and the details of the carved enrichment were the expression of the carver's fancy, dignified and restrained by the canons of cultivated taste.

In the present year's Italian Exhibition at Earl's Court (1904), one is pleased to find a few exceptions to this over-carved woodwork, and some of the reproductions of Italian Renaissance designs sent over by San Giorgio of Rome, both of polychromatic and also of gilded furniture, are much more satisfactory. The ornament in relief by means of "gesso" work is quite on the original lines, and some of the painted decoration, when not too ambitious, is in good taste.

The enormous difference between the fine old sixteenth-century work and these quite modern productions should be so palpable that comment seems unnecessary; the artist's proof engraving and the cheapest of popular prints from the same plate, seem to me to be a somewhat appropriate simile, but if we continue the comparison of the

different "states" of an engraving with the various classes of reproductions of Italian furniture, one may mention that the older furniture, made from fifty to a hundred years ago, worn and toned by age and rubbing, is perhaps more like some of those excellent impressions from the plate which follow the artist's proofs. These are apt to be taken by even an expert for the original pieces of Renaissance work. Naturally they vary in degrees of excellence, and one can only be guided by the vigour and expression of the carved work; by the appearance of the wood itself; when either entirely gilt or picked out with gilding, by noticing the care with which the work has been done. There are really no absolute tests to decide the age of a cassone, a table or a chair of the kind of work discussed in this chapter, but by applying some of the cautions which have been given under the remarks on "faked" furniture, and by bearing in mind that old Renaissance woodwork has been made nearly *four hundred* years, and therefore is extremely rare and difficult to find in anything like a complete state, the reader may be helped to distinguish between an original and a *bad* copy; that old and good copies will not occasionally find their way into the best collections is outside the limits of reasonable expectation.

CHAPTER V

DUTCH FURNITURE

Old Flemish Gothic carving—Flemish Renaissance—Dutch influence on English furniture—The settlement of Huguenot refugee artisans in Holland, and also in England—Seventeenth century English furniture practically Dutch, either imported or made by Dutch workmen—The kinds of furniture made at this period—Sir William Chambers and Thomas Chippendale—Difference between French and Dutch designs and manufacture—Peculiarities of Dutch marqueterie—Descriptions of some of the articles made in Holland in the eighteenth century—Advice to purchase old Dutch furniture of this period—The marqueterie of some forty years ago—Made and "arranged" for auction sales—Belgian carved work—The South Kensington Museum—Old Dutch painted furniture.

THE countries which formerly were known as the Low Countries or the Netherlands, Flanders and Holland, were noted for the skill and ingenuity of their wood-carvers, and the interiors of some of the beautiful cathedrals, churches, and town halls of Antwerp, Amsterdam, Bruges and Brussels, bear testimony to the fine work which was done, both in the old Gothic times and after the Renaissance movement had "come to stay" from Italy.

As the sixteenth century advanced, so did the prosperity of the burgomaster and the burgess, and the residences of the wealthy citizens of these old Flemish centres of industry gave employment and encouragement to the craftsmen of the period

in the production of more comfortable furniture. Very little of the domestic furniture of Holland has been preserved to us of a time earlier than the late seventeenth century, but there are some very fine examples of the best Flemish Renaissance in the South Kensington collection. One of the most noteworthy is an ebony cabinet, on spirally turned legs, having the square doors which inclose the upper part, most beautifully carved with numerous figures and arabesques. I have given a full-page illustration of this important piece. There is also another cabinet, the drawer fronts of which are carved very minutely and carefully with figure-work in pear-tree. These are probably of seventeenth-century workmanship, which may be taken as the best time for Flemish Renaissance.

Towards the latter end of the seventeenth century the Dutch made great progress in the production of good furniture, and during the reign of Charles II and the short government of James II, Dutch taste exercised a growing influence on our English design and manufacture. This influence may be said to have culminated when "Dutch William" as the husband of Mary, daughter of James II, ascended the English throne, and brought over with him to settle in the country of his adoption many of the leading families from Holland. There was also another influence which about this time affected to a considerable degree the industrial arts of both Holland and England, and that was the settlement of several thousands of the Huguenot refugees, who by the cruel revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 were expelled from France. These refugees were mostly of the industrial class, silk weavers, glass workers, cabinet

DUTCH LACQUER CABINET
LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

makers and joiners, and it is a well-known historical fact that some of our now old-established industries owe their origin in Holland and in England to this expatriation of skilful French craftsmen.

It may sound like an Irish "bull" to say that the best English furniture of the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century is Dutch, but such is undoubtedly the fact, either by the actual importation of the completed article, or by the settlement in England of Dutch workmen to make the furniture at this time in vogue. The tall clock, well known under its title of "Grandfather," the chair with cabriole leg, sometimes ending in a claw and ball, sometimes with a plain round foot, the flat-shaped support in the middle of the back of the chair, and the shaping of the seat, formerly square, are all of Dutch importation or influence. Bureau bookcases, the upper part of which were intended to contain books and papers, generally filled with numerous recesses, pigeon holes and secret drawers, are from the same source. Lacquer cabinets with carved and gilt stands, made in Holland half a century earlier, with many fine pieces of the Flemish Renaissance furniture, already described, were brought over to England with the Oriental china vases which had long been imported from the East by the Dutch pioneers of trade with China and the East Indies.

During the reign of William and Mary, and also that of Queen Anne, Dutch influence was very strongly marked on our furniture and accessories, and, so far as the writer's observations have gone, it is not until the time of Sir William Chambers and of Thomas Chippendale that our English

designer and cabinet maker asserted himself and established a new school. With these makers of the latter part of the eighteenth century I propose dealing in a separate chapter. For the moment to return to Dutch furniture; it is necessary to notice that the marqueterie of Holland of the earlier part of the eighteenth century was, as a rule of a much less variegated kind than that made in France—fewer kinds of veneers were used, and the forms of the pieces themselves were heavier and less graceful. In general outline the commodes and writing tables ornamented with marqueterie, were similar to those of late Louis XIV and early Louis XV, but with an important difference respecting the brass or gilt bronze mountings.

The art of producing beautiful and highly-finished metal mounts has never been carried to anything like the same extent in any other country but France, and even the best of the old Flemish commodes and tables in the French style, are inferior to those made in France, unless it be furniture made in the provinces, as distinct from the more highly-finished work of the Parisian *ébeniste* and mounter.

The "sea weed" pattern marqueterie, which has been so called on account of the holly-tree pattern resembling a marine plant, was a favourite kind of inlay in Holland, and is still found in tall clocks, bureaus and tables now generally called "Queen Anne" furniture. Another peculiarity of Dutch marqueterie of this time and later, was the enriching of the floral pattern inlay by adding ivory and mother-of-pearl to the design, which generally consisted of holly-wood leaves and flowers stained a yellow tint on a dark coloured ground, sometimes

DUTCH MARQUETERIE MIRROR FRAME
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

DUTCH MARQUETERIE TABLE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

walnut-wood and sometimes a West Indian veneer the colour of teakwood.

Some of the Dutch furniture is particularly massive and cumbersome, the huge wardrobes, slightly *bombé* in front, and with scroll pediments, have doors and drawers so thick and heavy that only a huge room can accommodate them. The oak armoires or presses of Dutch make, are generally straight-fronted, and a feature of their design is an arrangement of three fluted pilasters or half columns, with a carved base about a foot high, the rest or upper part of the column or pilaster being fluted and having a carved capital of Ionic or Corinthian character. Between these pilasters are panels, the rails of which are moulded, and the centres carved with flat scrolls in low relief. Not infrequently some small centres of black stained pear-tree and some lines of the same colour give a relief to the oak, and this by the way is not so richly figured as is the English wood of the same period.

About the time of Louis XVI in France and of George III in England, when the rococo style gave way to a more severe school of design, the Dutch made a great deal of excellent mahogany furniture, often mistaken for Chippendale and Heppelwhite work. The wood itself is well-selected and rich in figure, the construction is sound and workmanlike, such carving as there is corresponds rather to the work of Heppelwhite than to that of Chippendale, but the pieces themselves are more massive than was the English work of the period.

Wardrobes with column supports having capitals and bases of brass work, the cornices dentelled and surmounted by triangular pediments, often broken in the centre for the introduction of a flat-shaped

vase; some festoons of carved drapery in the upper parts of the doors, and a neat carved enrichment running round the drawers, are some of the salient features of a good old Dutch piece of about 1770-1780, probably very familiar to many amateurs of old furniture.

Card tables of solid plain mahogany, bureaus, and tall clock cases, tripod vase or lamp holders, napkin or linen presses, and cabinets for holding Delft ware and old Chinese porcelain, were all made in this good old mahogany.

If I may add a word of advice to the reader, it is that this class of old Dutch furniture is well worth attention. Now that old English cabinet work of the time has reached a price that only the very wealthy can afford, this good honest work of the latter part of the eighteenth century of Dutch make is excellent value if judiciously bought, and is certain to attain a much higher price as really well-made old furniture becomes more scarce.

About a hundred years later, that is, some forty years ago, the marqueterie furniture made in Holland deteriorated—several dealers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht bought up quantities of inferior furniture, and, to use a trade term, "smothered it with marqueterie;" flowers, birds and butterflies cut very coarsely, and of crude and vivid colours, were applied carelessly and in the cheapest manner for shipment to this country and periodical sales by auction. The inlay started and split, sometimes the body of the piece acted in a similar manner, as soon as it was placed in a hot room. These sales were carried on for several years, the marqueterie sent over being sold for very low prices by auction, and then being "done up" by the trade

and made the best of, but after a time the fabrication or meretricious decoration of this kind of furniture became unprofitable and ceased. One cannot help wondering what has become of the shiploads of Dutch marqueterie which from twenty to thirty years ago used to pass through the hands of Messrs. Jones and Bonham at those frequent sales. Some, no doubt, has survived by reason of expensive restoration and partial reconstruction, but much must assuredly have perished. It is this kind of work which for a time gave to Dutch marqueterie such a bad reputation that to be "Dutch" was to signify inferiority.

Belgian work must come under the heading of Dutch furniture, and although much of the older oak work, in panelling and furniture, is of good quality and workmanship, the desire to provide the English consumer with a cheap article, has damaged the reputation of the Belgian manufacturer.

During the past forty or fifty years sideboards with florid trophies of fruit and dead game, chairs of a floral pattern, all made in the poorest quality of oak and carved in the most atrocious manner, have flooded our markets. The price has been almost incredibly cheap—fifteen shillings and even less for a high-backed chair with legs, stretcher and frame covered with carved work. Bookcases and buffets with scrolls and lions' heads ending in foliage, stained a more or less "antique" colour, sold "in the white," that is, unstained, for a few pounds, have unfortunately fostered a considerable trade in this very undesirable kind of merchandise, which has declined in popularity as the taste of Englishmen, even of the middle class, has become more refined.

In the South Kensington Museum the reader will find some good representative specimens of old Dutch furniture of the different periods and classes noticed in this chapter, and it will be seen from these that Holland has been a very important factor in the history of the furniture of Europe, and particularly in shaping the taste and traditions of English furniture of the last two hundred years.

This is so much the case that in dealing with our great English makers of the eighteenth century, I propose to pass over the early part of that period, because practically the history of that time would be mainly a repetition of what has been said in this chapter under the heading of the Dutch furniture of the same period.

Another class of old Dutch furniture, of which one finds specimens occasionally, demands a short notice. About the middle of the eighteenth century there was apparently a fashion for painting some of the furniture. Sometimes it was prepared much in the way that the *Vernis Martin* work was done in France, and not unlike in appearance the finished panel of a carriage, with pictures of ships and portraits of native statesmen or celebrities on horseback or seated in council.

This work is said to have been more prevalent in the north of Holland, where it was also the custom to pick out some of the oak furniture with colours, generally red and green, which, with parts of the oak left a rich warm brown tint, has a pleasing effect. One has seen folding tables of this kind of decoration, in form not unlike the one which is illustrated in my Jacobean chapter. A few years ago when some demand set in for old Dutch

painted furniture, the dealers bought up the old sleighs, and snow chairs which had good painted work, and made them up into cabinets.

Similar painted work was also made in Norway and Sweden, and when both are of similar date, it is almost impossible to say which is Dutch or which Scandinavian, unless there be something in the character of the painted panel subject to help the distinction.

CHAPTER VI

ENGLISH FURNITURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The term Georgian—Dutch influence on English furniture, the use of mahogany—Gillow established. THOMAS CHIPPENDALE—Early work—"The Cabinet Maker and Director"—Influence of Sir W. Chambers—Chippendale's second period—The Society of Upholders and Cabinet makers—Chippendale's designs. HAIG AND CHIPPENDALE—An old account quoted. INCE AND MAYHEW—Their book of designs. CONTEMPORARY MANUFACTURERS—Thomas Johnson, Mathias Lock, Manwaring. A HEPPELWHITE AND CO.—Book of designs and list of patterns—Influence of Robert and James Adam. GILLOWS—Popular fancies. THOMAS SHERATON—"The Cabinet maker and Upholsterer's drawing book"—Designer rather than Manufacturer—Some particulars of his career—His designs and criticisms on his contemporaries. PAINTED AND ENAMELLED FURNITURE—The Adam influence—Contemporary artists who painted furniture—Wedgwood's plaques inserted—Process of finishing painted furniture—Old and new work—Museum references.

IT is a curious instance of the whirligig of fashion that the term "Georgian," which thirty years ago was applied to architecture and clumsy and massive buildings, affecting the classic style of the ancient temple, but lacking its proportions and dignity, should lately have become a term to denote a fashionable period of taste. The word was one of reproach and contempt, as if to say, making a vulgar pretence, "Georgian!" Now we have rooms, chimney-pieces and furniture, advertised and recommended as "Georgian," by which it is meant that they are of the time including the reigns

ENGLISH MIRRORS IN WALNUT WOOD, ALSO CARVED AND GILDED
EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

of the four successive English kings, from 1714 to 1827, and therefore the period of the history of furniture which covers the careers of Chippendale, his contemporaries and immediate successors.

In the chapter on Dutch furniture I have endeavoured to show that at the end of the seventeenth, and during the early part of the eighteenth century, that is, from the accession of William and Mary to the death of Queen Anne, a strong Dutch influence was impressed upon our English furniture. To this time belong the early specimens of our "grandfather" clocks, the old-fashioned bureau-bookcase, the chair with cabriole leg and claw-and-ball foot, and a flat-shaped "splat" in the back; mirrors with narrow walnut-wood moulded frames, the larger ones having the glass in two or three divisions, chests of drawers inclosed by two doors of walnut wood, veneered in patterns formed by the figure of the wood running different ways, and such smaller articles as the tripod stand for a basin, and the work table fitted with contrivances for winding silks, and other ladies' accessories: the harpsichord and spinet, the quaint card table with cabriole leg, sometimes ornamented with an eagle's head; and English lacquer made in imitation of that which originally came from China and Japan. These form a rough list of some of the articles of furniture about this time.

The use of mahogany was becoming fashionable, for, although discovered as a rare wood more than a hundred years previously, it was not until the first quarter of the eighteenth century had turned, that it was extensively used in the manufacture of furniture. The house of Gillow was founded in Lancaster at the end of the seventeenth century,

although the London branch was not opened until 1765, and this firm's reputation for well-made solid mahogany furniture was then established.

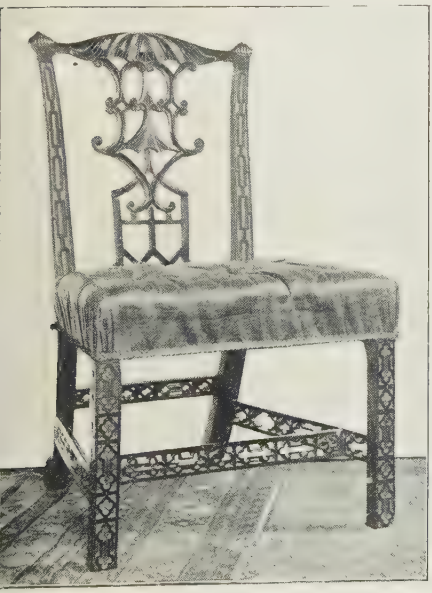
Thomas Chippendale

It is difficult to assign any precise date to the first work of Thomas Chippendale. There is a chair in the Soane Museum, said to be the work of his own hand, and the original receipt for payment is stated to have once been in the possession of the museum. This is of the Dutch type, to which reference has already been made, and the date one would put at about 1720. There is also the illustration of a chair in "The Furniture of our Ancestors," which the author tells us was brought to England in 1727, and this has every appearance of being by Chippendale, and we know that the first edition of the famous "Gentleman and Cabinet-maker's Director" was published by him in 1754. Mrs. R. S. Clouston, who has written several articles for "The Connoisseur" on this famous furniture designer and maker, thinks that his first work may have been done as early as 1715.

When we consider that the date of the publication of the third edition of the "Director" was in 1762, he would have been about seventy years of age at this time if any work of his was *en évidence* in 1715. I am inclined, therefore, to place the date of his first work somewhat later, say from 1720-1725.

Chippendale, who was a native of Worcestershire, established himself as a cabinet maker in St. Martin's Lane, probably somewhere about 1720-1725, and at first made the kind of chairs which

ENGLISH SETTEE IN WALNUT
EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (CHIPPENDALE'S FIRST PERIOD)



CHAIR ATTRIBUTED TO CHIPPENDALE

CHAIR BY THOMAS CHIPPENDALE

I have already alluded to, more Dutch than English in character, but of mahogany instead of walnut, which the Dutch more generally used. His second period seems to have derived its inspiration from Sir William Chambers, R.A., the architect of Somerset House, who about this time, 1745-1750, had travelled in the East and returned imbued with strong impressions of Chinese designs, which he introduced to his clients. He published a book, entitled "Chinese Buildings," in 1757, and built the Pagoda in Kew Gardens. Chinese pagodas, Chinese wall-papers and designs became a fashion, and Chippendale, who was more adapter than original designer, made his chairs and mirror frames to suit the rooms designed by Chambers. In several of the houses of Sackville Street, Dublin, and also in other parts of that city, there are still evidences of this combination; on the walls of the staircase and over the chimney-piece there is a panel inclosed by a rococo frame of stucco work, part of the original design of the house, and such panels could really have had no other suitable filling than one of Chippendale's rococo frames.

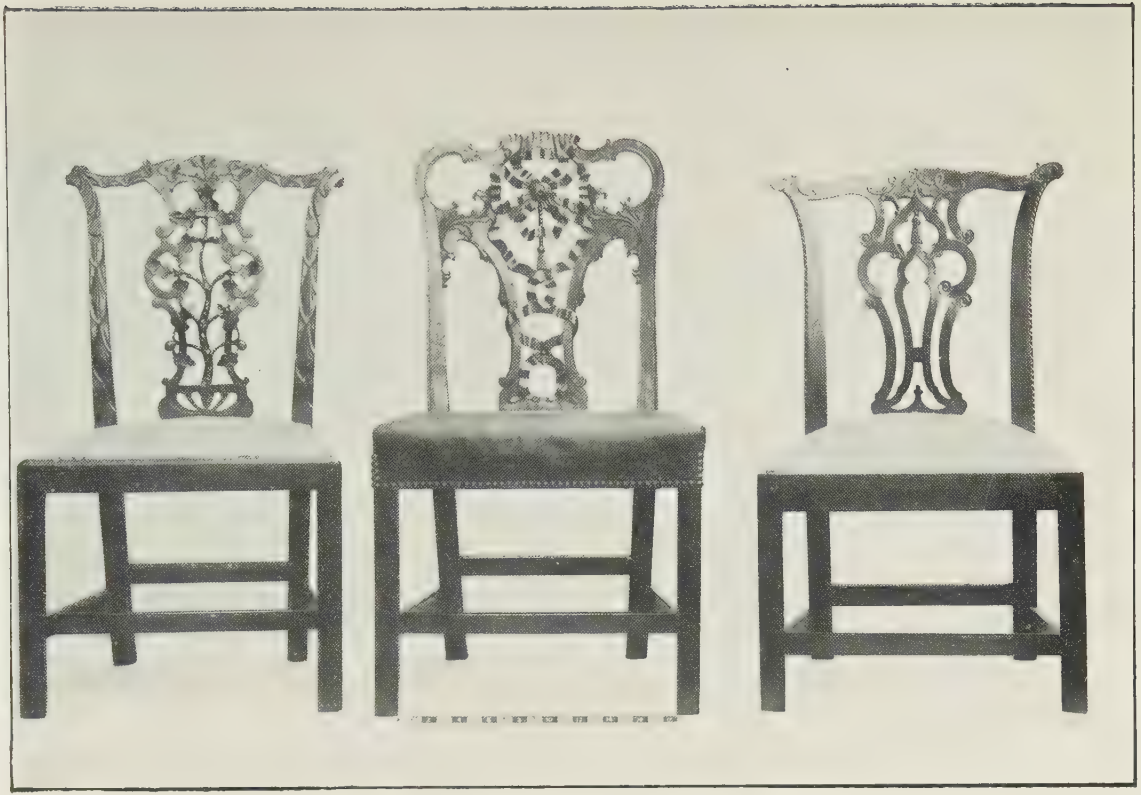
In the "Director" there are several designs for these, with a Chinese mandarin holding an umbrella on the top, and some quaint stork-like birds perched on conventional rockwork with dripping water. The frame is divided into several compartments by rococo scrolls and bevelled-sided little pilasters.

The chairs and some of the cabinets followed similar lines. The upper part of the cabinets are in imitation of a Chinese joss-house, and some of the chairs have an Eastern lattice for the back, finishing at the top with a carved ornament resembling the roof of a pagoda.

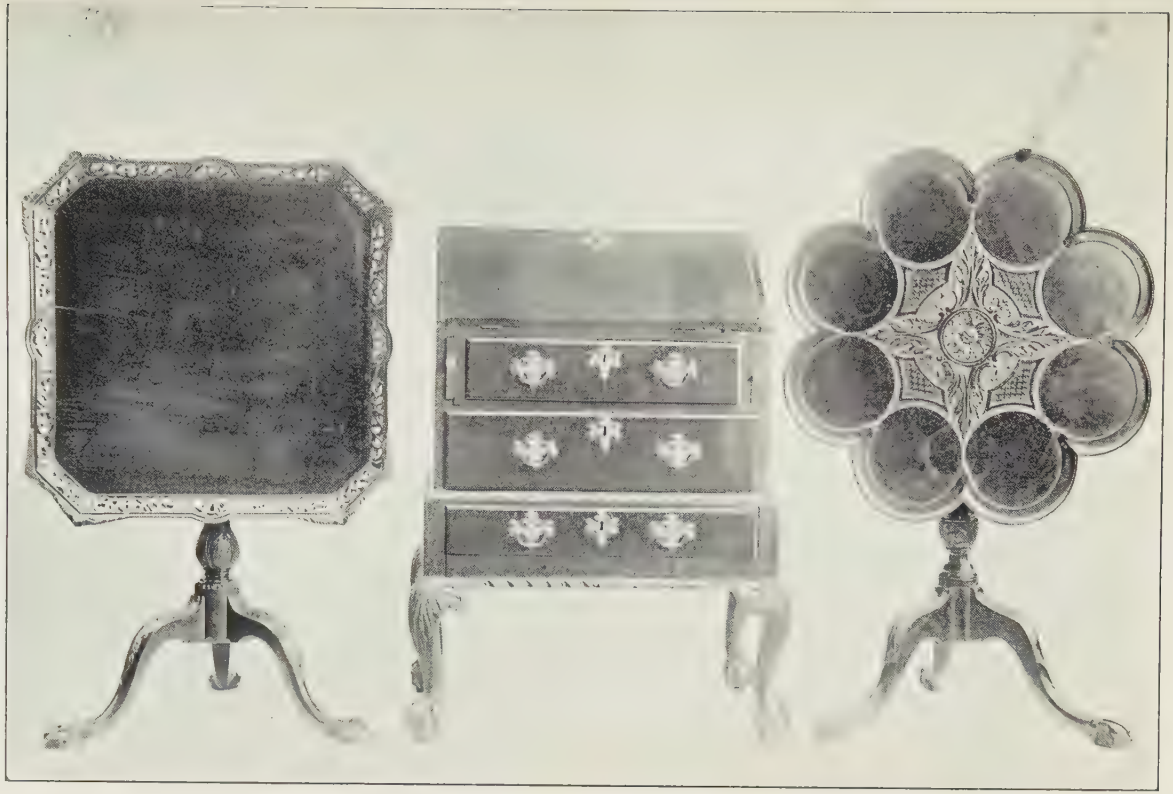
Some years later we find that, taking fresh impressions from the lighter style of the French furniture of the time, that is, the more frivolous curves and scrolls of the Louis XV period, Chippendale made his chairs of more fanciful patterns, like the riband-backed design which is so well known and so frequently copied. To many of the drawings in his third edition of the "Director" we find the description "a French commode," or similar title, which shows that in following the prevailing fashion, Chippendale was adapting some of his new designs to French patterns.

In another book published about this time, and containing the reproductions of several of Chippendale's drawings, there is the following inscription on the title-page: "Upwards of one hundred new and genteel designs, being all the most approved patterns of household furniture in the French taste. By a Society of Upholders and Cabinet makers." This title-page bears no date, but it is said that Chippendale was formerly a member of the society, and after some disagreement, decided to publish his own book of designs independently. Within the last few years there have been published cheap reproductions of the original books, and readers can see for themselves the strong French bent which the ornamental furniture of this time was now taking.

Chippendale's furniture has been much criticised on account of the fanciful details of many of his designs, but some of the criticisms would lose much of their force if the articles of furniture, either made by him or by the best of his contemporaries, were before the critics, instead of only the designs. It is said that Chippendale handed his original draw-



CHIPPENDALE CHAIRS (SECOND PERIOD)



THREE PIECES OF FURNITURE ATTRIBUTED TO CHIPPENDALE

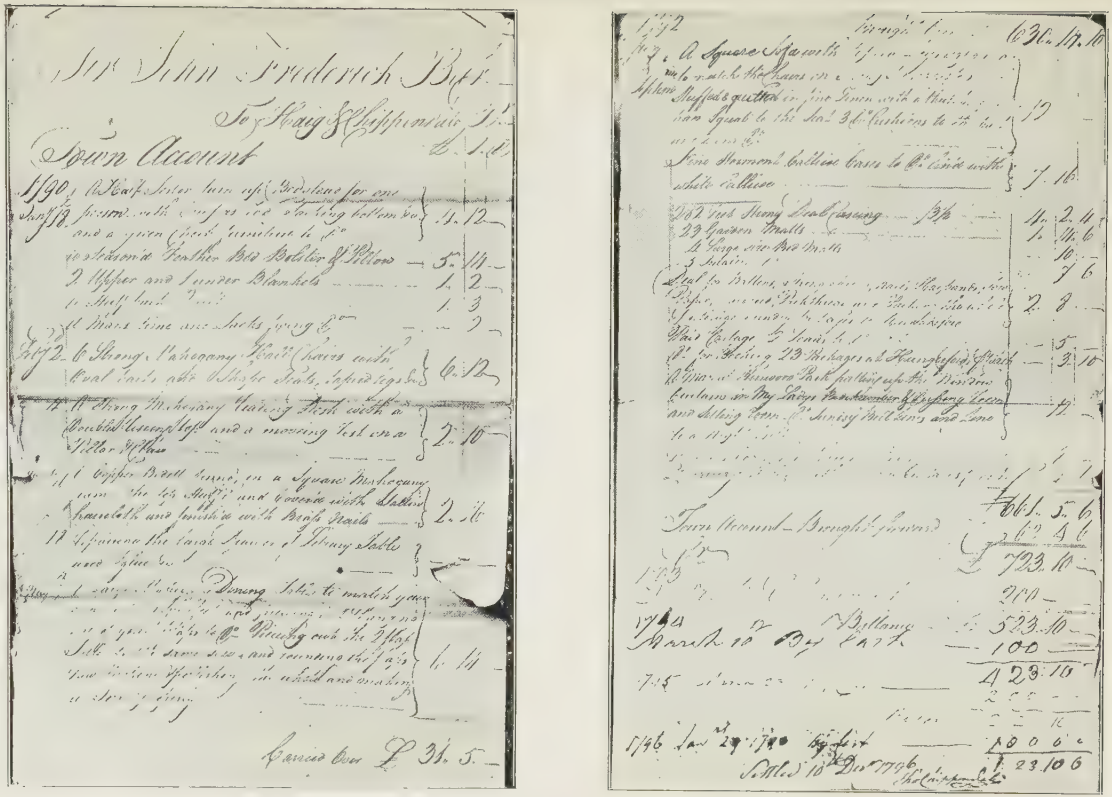
ings to the copperplate engraver, who would naturally endeavour to make his work as artistic as possible, and in so doing, while producing a charming design, rendered it scarcely practicable for a cabinet or chair maker, by reason of the fineness of the lines and consequent absence of strength and solidity. In really good old furniture by the best makers of this time, there is in the well-moulded sweep of the curves, some compensation for the apparent fragility of design, and in the chapter on "faked furniture" and in "Hints and Cautions" I have endeavoured to point out one of the signs by which the real old chair or frame may be distinguished from the imitation. It is this "sweep" which requires so much more wood, and consequently infinitely more skilful work. A chair frame which is apparently only two inches thick must be cut from mahogany of some four or five inches substance, to allow for the sweep in the lines of a good old Chippendale chair—but more of this has been said in the chapters already referred to, and we must return to the books of designs. There are several names of articles of furniture which are now but interesting links with the past: "Library case" instead of bookcase; "Bar-backed sofa," the settee of the period formed like three or four chairs placed side by side, with an arm at either end; "Confidante" or "Duchesse," the former being the two-chair settee of the time, and the latter the English equivalent of a French *chaise-longue*; "Tea chest" and "urn stand," which remind us of the time when tea was an expensive luxury, costing 10*s*. and 12*s*. a pound. The urn stand was a charming little table, sometimes oval and sometimes square on four tapering legs, with

a little slide pulling out underneath its top to accommodate the teapot, which was filled from the urn. These are a few of the names of the two hundred designs in Chippendale's book.

The full-page illustrations of specimens of Chippendale's furniture selected from those in the South Kensington collection, will demonstrate the different periods of his work, the earlier chairs showing the Dutch and then the Chinese influences, while the later ones show the lighter and more capricious lines which were adopted from the French fashions.

Haig and Chippendale

By the kindness of Captain Herbert Terry of Ripley, an enthusiastic collector of old English furniture, I am able to give an illustration from a photograph of the first and last pages of an original bill receipted by Thomas Chippendale, junior, who had at this time a partner, the firm being Haig and Chippendale. The whole account, consisting of several folios, is for the furnishing of the town house of Sir Richard Frederick, who was Captain Terry's great-uncle, and the document has been in the possession of the family ever since it was rendered. As the photograph indicates, it was commenced in 1790, and the balance paid in 1796, and it includes a great many very ordinary household items, by no means of the ornamental kind that we are in the habit of associating with the name of Chippendale. On reference to the old London Directories in the newspaper room of the British Museum, there will be found the name of the firm described as "upholders and cabinet makers" of 60, St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross,



THE FIRST AND LAST PAGES OF HAIG AND CHIPPENDALE'S BILL, WITH THE SIGNATURE OF THOMAS CHIPPENDALE

from 1790 to 1798, when the name of Thomas Chippendale, "cabinet maker" of the same address, appears alone, from which it is evident that either Haig died, or that the partnership had been dissolved. It is singular that the name of Haig should precede that of Chippendale, as if he were at the time senior partner, and it may be that the original Thomas, like so many men who did excellent work, died in circumstances that rendered it advisable that the son who succeeded him should seek the pecuniary assistance of a partner with capital to enable him to carry on the business, and that after the father's death the character of the business became less of a special, and more of a general furnishing character. We can only guess, but the account quoted above, rather leads one to this conclusion.

The prices charged for some of the articles afford material for interesting comparison with those which such things would realize at the present time. While on the subject of prices, however, it should be mentioned that it is only within the last twenty years that Chippendale furniture has appreciated at such a rapid rate. Twenty-five years ago, excellent Chippendale, Heppelwhite or Sheraton chairs could have been bought for ten pounds each, and the more ordinary kinds for twenty-five to thirty-five shillings each.

The following is an extract from the above mentioned account of Haig and Chippendale.

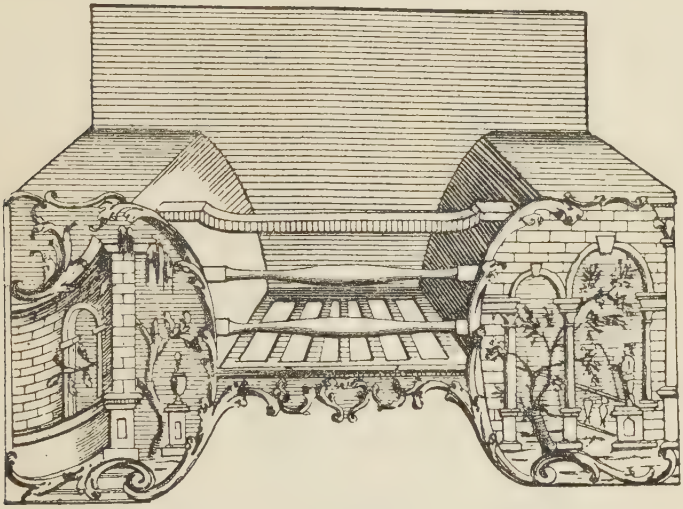
	£ s. d.
A very large mahogany wardrobe of good wood for the recess with folding doors and 7 slideing shelves lin'd with marble paper and baize aprons 2 long and 2 short drawers under	16 10 0

	£	s.	d.
A large oval work table with folding top made of fine black rosewood banded with white a drawer in front, and therm feet in strong socket castors	5	16	0
A large Wainscot press bedstead with folding doors and sacking bottom for nursery	3	10	0
12 neat carv'd Mahogany square back Parlor chairs the seats stuffed and covered with the finest green Morocco leather and finished with double rows of best gilt nails 48*s.* ea.	28	16	0
6 ditto arm'd chairs seats stuffed and cover'd in the same manner 58*s.*	17	8	0

It is worth while to note some points in the above extract. One of these is, that from the wording of the first item it is evident that "good" wood was then, as now, an appreciable quality; it occurs in other items in the bill, and proves that there was then, as now, "good," bad and indifferent, and that not everything that is old was necessarily made of good, that is, carefully selected and well-figured material.

In the second item, the work table is described as being made of "fine black rosewood." In 1803 Sheraton mentions this "black" rosewood as being the fashion, and therefore we may assume that somewhere about 1790, or a little earlier, this wood was in favour for a certain class of ornamental furniture. The "therm" feet are doubtless the tapered form supports which came in about this time, after the cabriole or scroll-form leg had gone out of fashion. On the first page of the bill, which is illustrated from a photograph, some chairs are described as having tapered legs. The set of eighteen "parlor" chairs, twelve single and six arms, have also an interest, as marking the time when these square-framed chairs with upholstered backs came into vogue, and if we

turn to one of the illustrations of Sheraton's designs, this kind of chair will be seen. It is quite evident, then, that Haig and Chippendale conformed, like most other manufacturers, to the fashions of the day, which altered between 1780 and 1790 to the more sedate and sober lines which are



A BATH STOVE, BY INCE AND MAYHEW

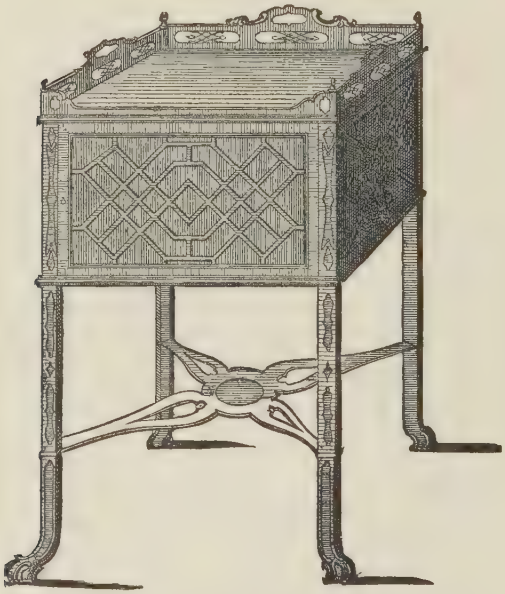
generally associated with the names of Sheraton and Heppelwhite.

Captain Terry's brother still has in his possession the wardrobe for which the sum of £16 10*s.* was charged in this account.

Ince and Mayhew

Another firm that carried on an extensive business about the same period as Thomas Chippendale

was Ince and Mayhew, in Broad Street, Golden Square, who also published a book of designs, entitled "The Cabinet maker's real friend and companion." It is singular that while the imprint on some old copper-plates in my possession should



A BEDROOM TABLE, BY INCE AND MAYHEW

be "Ince and Mayhew," with the address given as above, and while Sheraton in criticising their book of designs should write of the firm as it is here named, yet in the old London Directories of 1791-1795, and also in the list of master cabinet makers given by Sheraton at the end of his "Cabinet Dictionary," published in 1803, the style

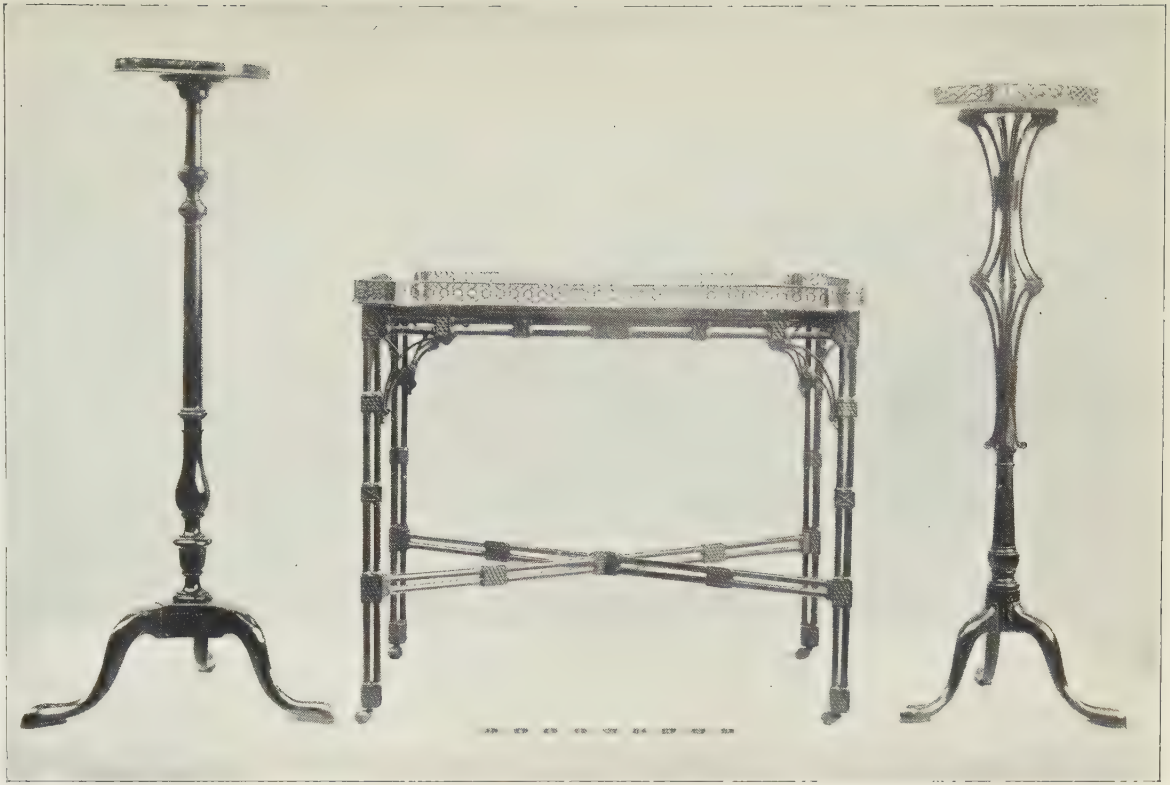
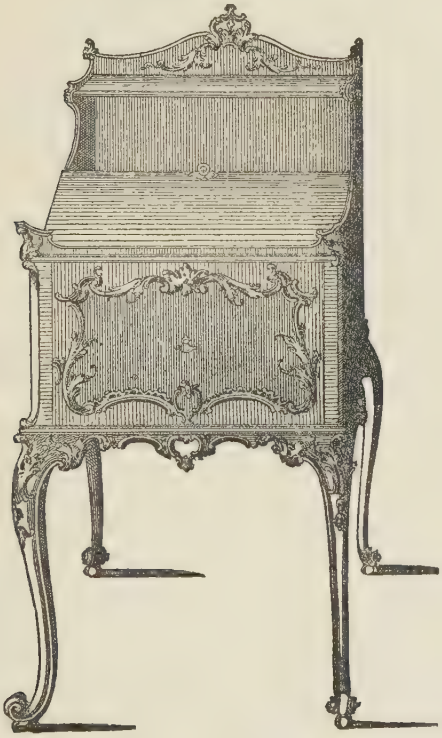


TABLE AND LAMP STANDS ATTRIBUTED TO INCE AND MAYHEW

of the firm should be Mayhew and Ince, and the address Marshall Street, Carnaby Market.

The designs published by them are similar to



A BEDROOM TABLE, BY INCE AND MAYHEW

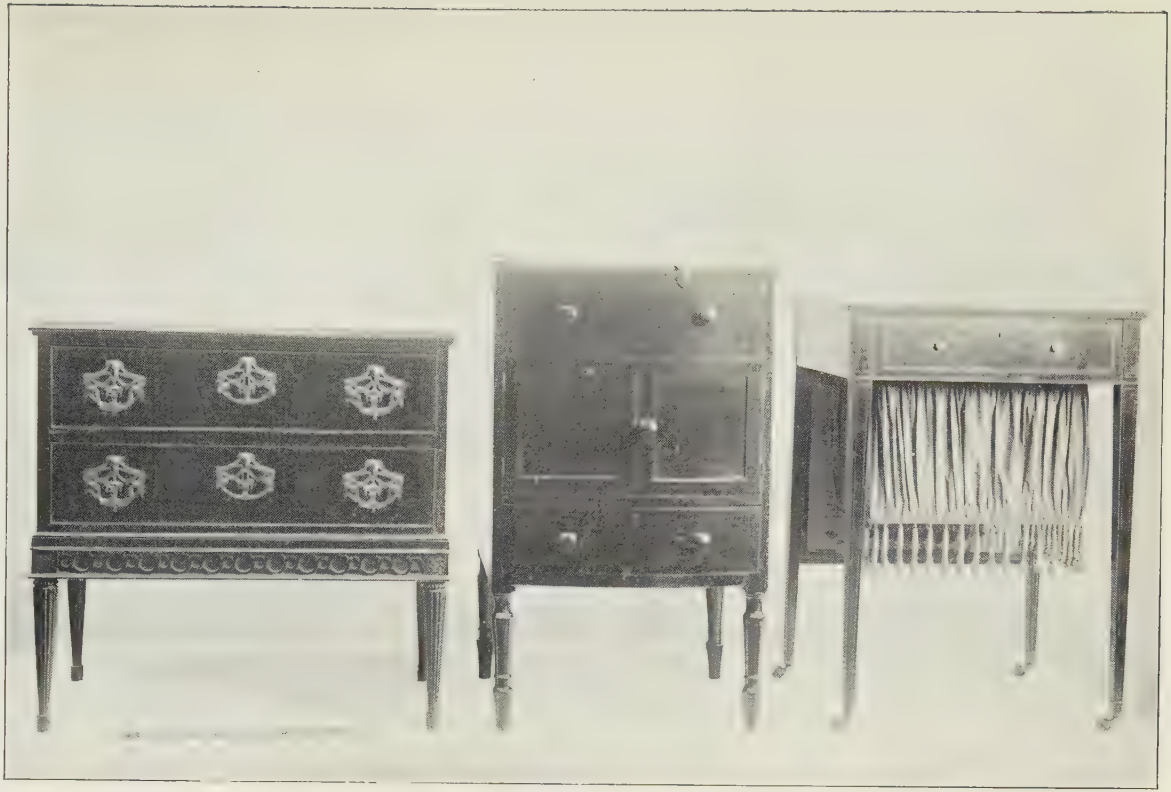
those of Chippendale, but have more of the fret-cut ornament than we find in the drawings of the latter. Indeed, although this fret-cut work has been so commonly identified with Chippendale there is remarkably little of it in his book.

The three illustrations in the text of designs by Ince and Mayhew, will show that, but for the fact of their appearance in the book of designs published by them, it would be somewhat difficult to "place" them. The Bath stove, although perhaps scarcely within the strict limits of furniture, has been selected because it shows the "baroque" taste of this period. The bedroom table, on the other hand, has more of the fret-cut ornament which has just been alluded to, while the bedroom table is quite of the Chippendale character in the scroll leg and also in the ornamental framing of the panel.

Contemporary Manufacturers

Some of the other manufacturers of this time, whose names are scarcely known now, but who nevertheless produced good work, were the following: France, a neighbour of Chippendale's in St. Martin's Lane; Charles Elliott; Campbell and Sons; Thomas Johnson; Copeland; Robert Davy; a celebrated chair-maker named Manwaring, and Mathias Lock. Of these men little is known of France, Elliott, and Campbell, save that they held appointments as cabinet makers to the King, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, but of Mathias Lock, Copeland, and Johnson, there is more information available.

Thomas Johnson was a carver who carried on business in Queen Street, near Seven Dials, Holborn, and published several books of designs for furniture. His first work, entitled "Twelve Girandoles," appeared in 1755, and his second in 1758 contained a number of drawings of chairs still more flamboyant than those of Chippendale.



ENGLISH FURNITURE
LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Mrs. R. S. Clouston's contention that we can trace Chippendale's more rococo style, which is evident in the second edition of his "Director," published in 1759, to the influence of Johnson's work of the previous year, may be correct.

Mathias Lock also published designs, both separately and in collaboration with Copeland, and as some of his original drawings are preserved in the South Kensington Library, they are available for examination. There are also some interesting memoranda attached to them, from which it appears that five shillings a day was at that time the full wage of a skilful wood-carver.

Manwaring also published a book which contained his designs for chairs, similar to Chippendale's, but with some technical differences, and as Mrs. Clouston has so carefully investigated them it is only fair to quote from her article in the "Connoisseur" of March, 1904: "The method in which the top rail joins itself to the design of the splat, the plain square leg in conjunction with a carved back, the bracket and the shaped front, would each of them have been unlikely in Chippendale's work, but are all typical of Manwaring."

A. Heppelwhite and Co.

Towards the latter part of Chippendale's time, *i.e.*, in 1789, the firm of A. Heppelwhite and Co. published a book of designs.

This valuable work of reference contains a hundred and twenty-seven copperplates with three hundred drawings of furniture, and is entitled "The Cabinet maker and Upholsterer's Guide, etc." So little attention comparatively, has been

paid to this designer and manufacturer of late eighteenth-century furniture, by writers on the subject, that it may be of some service to the reader to quote the list of patterns illustrated:

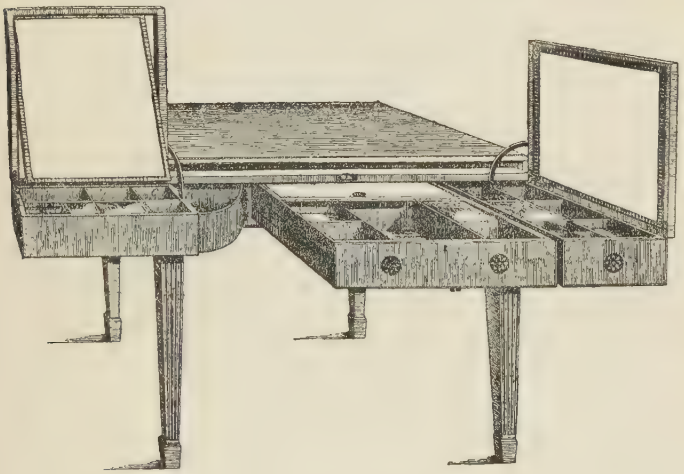
"Chairs
Stools
Sofas
Confidante
Duchesse
Side-boards
Pedestals and Vases
Cellerets
Commodes
Rudd's table
Bidets
Night tables
Bason stands
Wardrobes
Bed pillars
Knife cases
Desk and Bookcases
Secretary and Bookcases
Library cases
Library tables
Reading desks
Chests of drawers
Urn stands
Pot cupboards
Brackets
Hanging shelves
Fire screens
Beds
Field Beds
Sweeptops for ditto
Tea Caddies
Tea Trays
Card tables
Pier tables
Pembroke tables
Tambour tables
Dressing glasses
Dressing tables and drawers
Candle stands
Lamp stands
Pier glasses
Terms for Busts
Cornices for Library cases
Wardrobes, etc., at large
Ornamental tops for Pier tables, Pembroke tables, commodes, etc.

in the plainest and most enriched styles with a scale to each, and an explanation in letterpress."

It will be seen that this is a fairly complete list, and the designs themselves are in excellent taste.

ENGLISH CHAIRS
LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The lines of chairs and sofas are restrained and dignified, neat but not effeminate, chaste and yet not severe. Where marqueterie is employed as a decoration, it is as a rich border to a plain centre, or an oval centre fan ornament with a festoon of husks or drapery. The drawings show that Heppelwhite was careful to use richly-figured veneers



"RUDD'S TABLE," BY A. HEPPELWHITE

for his tables, wardrobes or bookcases, and other pieces having plain surfaces.

The illustration given above of Rudd's table, or "a reflecting dressing table" is fully described in Heppelwhite's book, as taking its name from a "once popular character" for whom it was first made, and will convey to the reader an excellent idea of the mechanical tables in fashion at this period.

Generally speaking, one sees that the furniture

of Heppelwhite was designed for the houses built by Robert and James Adam, who at this time were designing some of the London streets, which remain as testimony of the good taste which marked their work. Stratford Place, part of Fitzroy Square, Adelphi Terrace, parts of Portman Square, Portland Place, and other important thoroughfares, can still be identified by the refined treatment of exterior as well as interior decoration.

Besides the furniture of mahogany, solid and

A COUCH, BY A. HEPPELWHITE

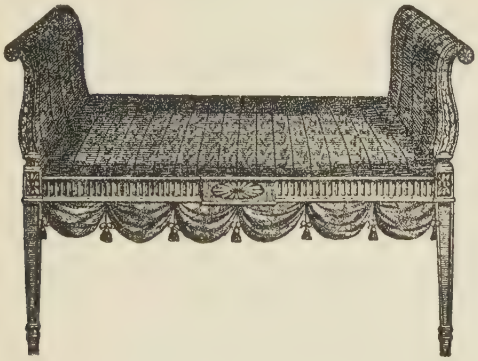
veneered, and of satinwood and marqueterie, Heppelwhite also devoted considerable attention to making furniture in beech and birch woods for enamelling and painting, and in his book directions are given as to the best kind of covering for such furniture.

Some chairs by this maker are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and are reproduced in the full-page illustrations of this chapter. Some of the smaller illustrations given in the text have been selected as showing a few of the many designs in his book.

CHAIRS ATTRIBUTED TO HEPPELWHITE

The couch illustrated on page 84 is in every respect an adaptation of a French Louis Seize design, while the window seat and the screens are dainty pieces of decorative furniture, characteristic of the period and the style of this firm.

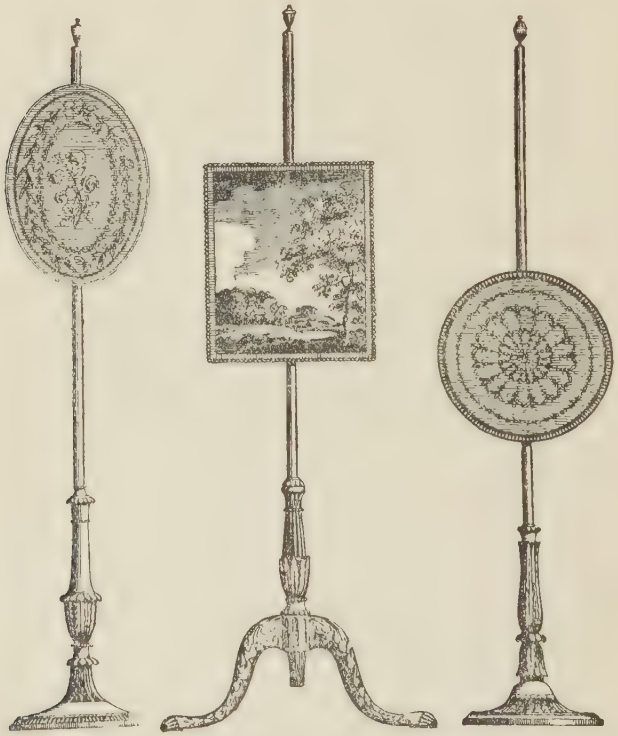
The "eared armchair" was made by many other upholsterers and cabinet makers of the period, and under the title of a "grandfather's chair," has been much reproduced during the present revival of the taste for old English furniture.



A WINDOW SEAT, BY A. HEPPELWHITE

A. Heppelwhite and Co. style themselves cabinet makers on the title-page of their book, but it is curious that the name does not appear in the London directories of the time, and still more strange that, in what purports to be a complete list of master cabinet makers and kindred trades compiled by Thomas Sheraton and placed at the end of the "Cabinet Dictionary," which he published in 1803, the name of this firm is not included. Thomas Chippendale, Robert Gillow and Co., Mayhew and Ince, Snell, Seddon and Co., and a great many

others are there, but not Heppelwhite. It almost seems as if they were like Sheraton himself, more theoretical than practical; or they may have worked exclusively for architects such as the Adams, and



POLE SCREENS BY HEPPELWHITE

had no regular show-room for the public. Unlike Chippendale's book, which gives his address, and also includes in the preface certain personal statements as to his ability to carry out any of the designs illustrated, the Heppelwhites give no

address, nor is there a single sentence which indicates a desire to secure increased trade by the publication of their designs.

The omission of the name in the directory I attach less importance to, than that from Sheraton's list, because the "London Directory" of the years referred to are very thin books of not much over half an inch thickness, and include what the compiler terms "eminent" bankers, merchants, and tradesmen, and many names in Sheraton's list are not to be found amongst the "eminent" ones of the directories.

Gillows

It should be remembered that at this period "Gillows" were carrying on a large business, and no doubt altered their designs to the new fashion. As a proof of this I may give an instance. Messrs. Waring and Gillow, who some few years ago acquired the business of the original firm of Gillows, lately exhibited a wardrobe which they stated to be an exact reproduction of one made by the old firm in the year 1796. The piece in question was of rich mahogany with broad bandings of satinwood, and was in every way just one of those which would be termed by nine persons out of ten a "Sheraton" design.

I think it was Mr. Balfour who in his manifesto on the great tariff controversy said, that "the British public like labels." This is quite as true of commodities as it is of political "war cries," and when once a certain class of furniture comes to be known by any given characteristics, it must be by the particular maker or of that particular kind, or it counts for nothing with the public. Thus it is that

every piece of old mahogany furniture is labelled "Chippendale," and by the same sort of rule every piece with satinwood inlay is called "Sheraton." The truth surely is, that when a fashionable craze sets in, it is followed, more or less, by all the manufacturers, but as only a few names become popular, these better-known makers have credit for a great deal of work which has been done by others.

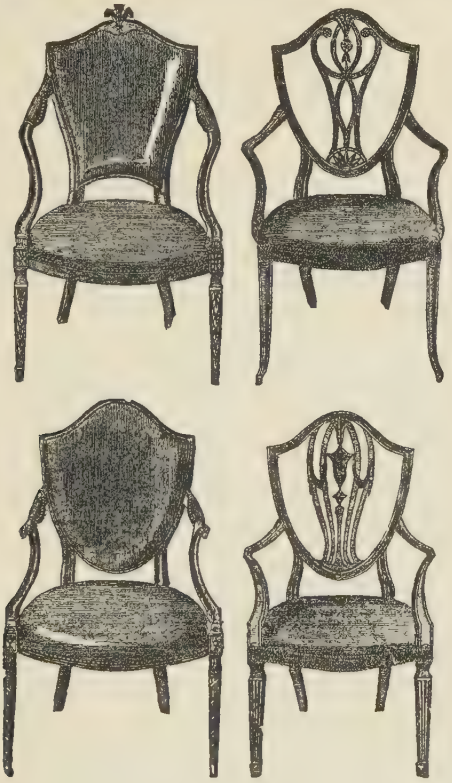
Thomas Sheraton

Next to Chippendale the name most familiar to the ordinary buyer or collector of old English furniture, is that of Thomas Sheraton. He was apparently a well-educated man, but from the rather didactic phraseology of "The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book," which was published by him in 1793, one gathers that he was a man who had risen from the ranks, and prided himself on his self-acquired knowledge. That he was an excellent draughtsman is without doubt, and in a rather verbose lecture on the laws of geometry and the five orders of architecture, he claimed to base all his designs on geometrical science. The book contains elaborate directions for perspective drawing, and his diagrams are as carefully finished as an engineer's plans, drawn to scale with mathematical nicety and precision.

How far he himself carried out his own designs is not known, nor have I been able to ascertain where he carried on business. When I was engaged in writing my "Illustrated History of Furniture," Mr. Black, of the publishing firm of A. and C. Black, Soho Square, told me that his grandfather, Mr. Adam Black, had, when quite a

ENGLISH BUREAU BOOKCASE
LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

young man, assisted Sheraton in the production of his book, and that at the time the famous designer was in such poor circumstances, as to be obliged to raise money by giving drawing lessons.



"SHIELD BACK" CHAIRS, DESIGNED BY SHERATON OR HEPPELWHITE

From this it is pretty evident that he must have been in a very small way of business, and it will probably be somewhat of a shock to many amateurs of old English furniture, to learn that Sheraton

was chiefly a designer and draughtsman. He was also a zealous Baptist, and published several books and pamphlets advocating his religious views. Besides his "Drawing Book" he also published in 1803 "The Cabinet Dictionary," explaining all the terms used by the "cabinet, chair, and upholsterers' branches," and he was engaged on "The Cabinet Maker and Artists' Encyclopaedia" when he died in 1806 in Broad Street, Soho, leaving his family in distressed circumstances.

As regards the designs of his chairs, they are practically so similar to many of those of Heppelwhite, that unless we had their respective books for identification it would be impossible to tell the one from the other. Both include the "shield" back with the Prince of Wales's feather ornament, and those with drapery festoons and "vase" centres. The Prince of Wales's feather, by the way, indicated something besides mere decoration; it was the badge of the young Court party as led by the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV.

The designs of Sheraton's marqueterie were somewhat similar to those of Heppelwhite, chiefly composed of mahogany and satinwood, but he depended more upon the excellent choice of his veneers, than upon elaborate ornament for his effects. His drawings indicate this, because the figure of the wood is shown by shaded lines. A characteristic feature of his cabinet designs, was the graceful "swan-necked" pediment surmounting the cornice of wardrobe, bookcase or cabinet. The sideboard of mahogany, banded with satinwood having fan pattern ornaments inlaid, the ends being rounded, supported by tapering legs, is a very familiar design, and also the handsome

brass rails which were fixed at the back and held a silk curtain to serve as a background to the silver, or ornaments standing on the board. Some of these brass rails were very handsome and supported a circular convex mirror in the centre, also branches for candles. Of the two urns which stood on the sideboard, one contained the silver-mounted knives, forks and spoons for use, and the other

A SIDE TABLE DESIGNED BY T. SHERATON, ABOUT 1795. SHOWING THE WELL-CHOSEN VENEERS, WITH BUT A SLIGHT INLAY OF BANDING AND THE "HUSK" ORNAMENT

was fitted with a tap and held water for cleansing them—this operation being apparently carried on in the room while the family was at dinner. They are graceful accessories, and were beautifully made, the alternate flutings of mahogany and satinwood being very carefully finished. Instead of these urns, knife cases were sometimes, or rather more generally, used. Most collectors know these quaintly-shaped boxes, made in mahogany

or satinwood, inlaid with shell ornaments, and of late years converted into spirit cases or holders for stationery.

Sheraton also designed a great many of the mechanical tables fashionable at the time. "A cylinder wash-hand table," besides the circular revolving front from which it derives its name, and which concealed the basin when shut, had a toilet glass which rose with a spring and a catch. From the sides were drawn out a bidet and water drawer. Some of his reading and writing tables had a number of adjustable slides and drawers with neatly contrived fittings.

The preface of his book contains severe strictures upon the want of perspective in the drawings of Chippendale and Heppelwhite, and particularly of those published by the "Society of Cabinet makers in London," to which it is thought that Chippendale, Manwaring, Johnson and others belonged.

By the light of recent events, when a couple of chairs by Chippendale have been sold at Christie's for a thousand guineas, it is amusing to quote Sheraton on page 9 of the preface of a book written within, say, ten or fifteen years of his rival's death. "Chippendale's book has, it is true, given us the proportion of the Five Orders, and lines for two or three cases, which is all it pretends to, relative to rules for drawing; *and as for the designs themselves, they are now wholly antiquated and laid aside,* though possessed of great merit, according to the times in which they were executed."

Then, dealing with the designs of Ince and Mayhew, he says, "The designs in cabinets and chairs are of course of the same cast, and have therefore suffered the same fate (been wholly laid

DOUBLE CHEST OF DRAWERS OR "TALL BOY," ABOUT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, MADE BY SEVERAL MANUFACTURERS (included in Heppelwhite's designs)

aside), in the cabinet branch according to the present taste, yet in justice to the work it may be said to have been a book of merit in its day, though inferior to Chippendale's, which was a real original, as well as more masterful and extensive in its designs."

Of Sheraton's later work from 1800 until his death six years afterwards, something will be said in the following chapter. He caught the fashionable epidemic of the Napoleonic fashion, and some of his bad English copies of the First Empire patterns do not enhance his reputation as a designer. In my "Illustrated History of Furniture" I have been able to give a much larger selection both from his and from Heppelwhite's designs than the limited space admits in this work. Both men have left their mark upon the furniture of English design and manufacture of the time corresponding to the period of Marie Antoinette in France. They show a similar spirit of grace and refinement, a relief from the *baroque* and flamboyant styles of Chippendale and his school, which corresponded to the rococo taste prevalent in France during the latter part of the reign of Louis XV.

Painted and Enamelled Furniture

The decoration of furniture by painting and enamelling, came into fashion in England during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Suites of chairs and sofas to match, made of beech or birch wood, were after careful preparation coated with successive layers of paint, white, cream colour, green and also black, and on these different

ENGLISH SATINWOOD COMMODE WITH PAINTED DECORATION
END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ground colours, panels of scrolls, figure subjects, landscapes and flowers were painted. The lines which defined the panels, and also such prominent parts of the chair as the terminals of the arms and feet, were gilt. The figure subjects in vogue were such as we find in the old Bartolozzi prints or pictures by Angelica Kauffmann; it was a time when the latter artist, Cipriani, Francesco Piranesi, and other contemporary painters were doing excellent work of a decorative character to the order of Robert Adam, who was in the zenith of his fame as an architect.

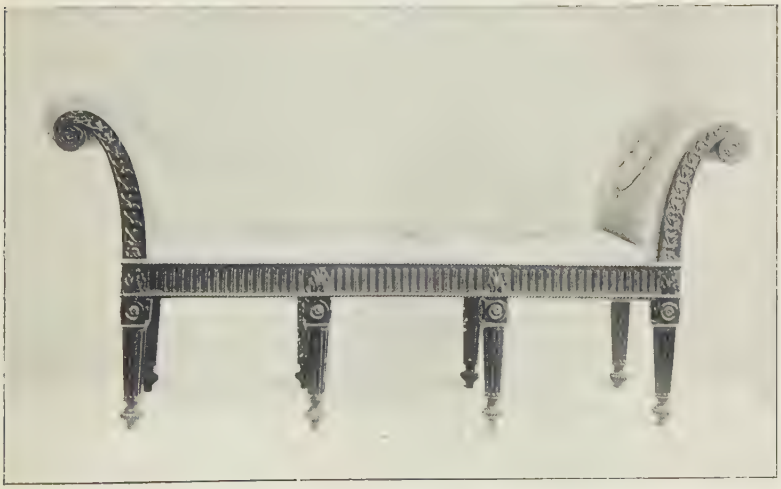
We have already seen that the brothers Adam were responsible for the interior decoration of many of the houses they designed, as well as the elevations and plans, and this form of enrichment by panel-painting was in great favour. In many old London houses the original work by Kauffmann and her contemporaries still remains, as they were fitted into the stucco panels of the ceilings, and the same kind of decoration was executed for commodes, cabinets, and other articles of furniture. One can call to mind several instances where such original ceilings may still be found, amongst others the house of the Savage Club in Adelphi Terrace, No. 1, Portman Square, and No. 25, Portland Place, designed and built by Robert Adam for his own occupation.

The best decoration by painting was used for such pieces of furniture as were not likely to get much hard wear, and the tops of the half-circular pier tables were favourite subjects for excellent work. In some of these the painting was executed on slabs of copper let into the table tops, while the friezes and legs were gilt, making a very satis-

factory combination of colour. The frieze of the table was generally carved in low relief with a design characteristic of the style, either the conventionalized honeysuckle or some other pseudo-classic ornament. The legs tapering, sometimes round and sometimes square, ornamented by flutes with or without husks. Instead of legs a favourite form of support was a pair of griffins, seated, their bodies terminating in scrolls. These mystic animals figured very frequently in Adam's designs, in the upper part of mirror frames, and as standards of tables and cabinets. The commodes of the period, with circular fronts sometimes had the ends concaved while the centre was convex, thus making a graceful serpentine; bookcases had what is termed break-fronts, that is, the long straight line broken by the centre compartment either projecting or receding a couple of inches. Work tables, screens, and other similar articles were made of satinwood or satinwood and mahogany combined, and, with these grounds to show off the painted panels, a very decorative effect was produced.

Another mode of enrichment of this class of furniture was the insertion of plaques of Wedgwood's jasper ware. John Flaxman had been sent to Rome by the great potter, Josiah Wedgwood, to make wax models and drawings of the famous Vatican gems; these were produced by Wedgwood in different colours of jasper ware, and the classical subjects of these plaques, such as the death of Achilles, nymphs sacrificing to Bacchus, and similar mythological illustrations, just suited the furniture of the Adam design and type.

The general lines of design were similar to those of Heppelwhite and Sheraton, and were



PIER TABLE AND WINDOW SEAT BY ROBERT ADAM
END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

probably in many cases the work of the same cabinet makers, but the decoration was by painting in lieu of marqueterie.

The finishing and polishing of painted furniture required skilful manipulation. The surface of the satinwood or mahogany was first carefully prepared by being scraped, and well rubbed down with sand or glass paper of varying degrees of coarseness, that is, from coarse to fine; then the painter did his work, which naturally stood out in very slight relief. When quite dry and hard, the polisher had to level up with successive coatings of fine white polish, by first treating the unpainted background, and then carefully polishing the whole, giving a glaze and finish to the surface. Sheraton has given us a recipe for making the polish in use at this time, at least some fifty or sixty years before the invention of what is termed "French" polish. Bees-wax and turpentine were boiled together, red lead and other colouring matter added if required, and this was applied and well rubbed with a soft pad. Fine brickdust screened by being passed through a stocking, was then "dabbed" on the polished surface, and this was again carefully rubbed to give a fine and uniform dull glaze.

When it was not expedient to employ a good painter for the chief panels, coloured prints were sometimes used, and treated just the same as the hand-painted subjects, by polishing.

English hand-painted furniture differs in one important detail from the *Vernis Martin* French furniture, already described in another chapter. The English work was done either on the wood itself, or on a copper panel let into the wood. In the case of *Vernis Martin*, the panel or surface to

be painted was first prepared by successive coatings of the patent varnish invented by the Martins, until a "body" or material was formed which resembled lacquer, the result being similar in effect to that of a highly-finished modern carriage panel.

Beautiful as much of the English painted work is, there is the great disadvantage of its liability to damage by scratches and dents, the result of ordinary wear and use, and such injuries cannot be removed, as is the case with an inlaid marqueterie pattern, but can only be repaired by partially or wholly repainting. It is therefore extremely difficult to find original pieces which do not show signs of more or less successful restoration.

Within the past ten or fifteen years, when the collection of this kind of English work has been fashionable, a number of plain pieces of old furniture suitable for this class of decoration, have been bought, and painted work in the style of the late eighteenth-century artists named above, has been added to enhance the value, and these have found a ready sale.

A great deal of entirely new work, both as to the furniture itself, and also the painting, has been made for the demand which the old work is quite unable to supply. Some of this is carefully done, and although not really old is of a good decorative character, but a great deal is of a cheap and inferior kind, both as to make and finish, and is but a parody on the fine old work which is now so difficult to procure and which realizes an enormous price.

There are some good examples of late eighteenth-century English painted furniture in the

South Kensington Museum, and if the reader should be visiting Ireland he will also find a number of small but representative specimens in the Dublin Museum.

CHAPTER VII

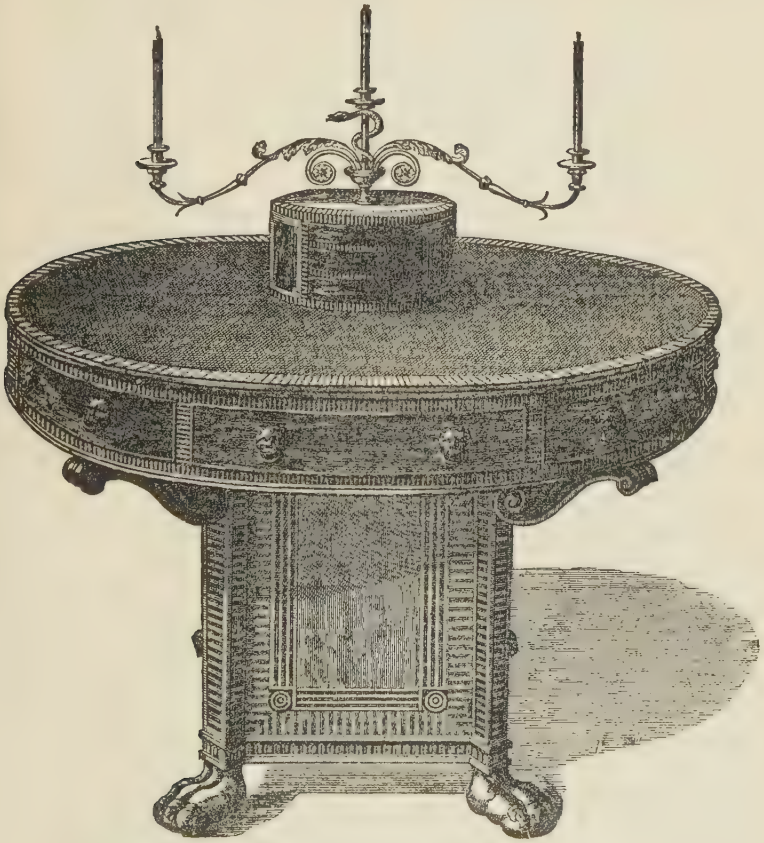
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

French influence on English design about 1800—Sheraton's drawings compared with his previous work—George Smith's book—The dining-table—Gillow's patent—Brass inlay—Firms of the period—Seddon and Co.—Characteristic Gillow furniture. EARLY VICTORIAN—The Rococo, and then the Gothic taste—The Royal Commission, and the Great Exhibition of 1851—The South Kensington Museum—Evolution of the sideboard—Papier maché furniture—Substantial furniture in the club houses—Ball-framed chairs—Worsted work—Reproductions of earlier styles—Wright and Mansfield, Jackson and Graham, and contemporary firms—Concluding remarks on the craze for buying inferior furniture, which has the semblance of age.

IN the latter part of the chapter dealing with French furniture it has been shown how, after the fury of the great Revolution had passed, the Government of the Directory was established. A decided revival of Greek and Roman designs then set in, afterwards accentuated when Napoleon became First Consul and subsequently Emperor, by the addition of sphinxes and griffins with the heads and feet of animals to ornament the furniture. It is singular, considering the intense hatred of Bonaparte, which at this time existed in England, that our designers and manufacturers should have copied the style affected by those who ministered to his taste. But undoubtedly this was the case. From about the year 1800 there was a marked

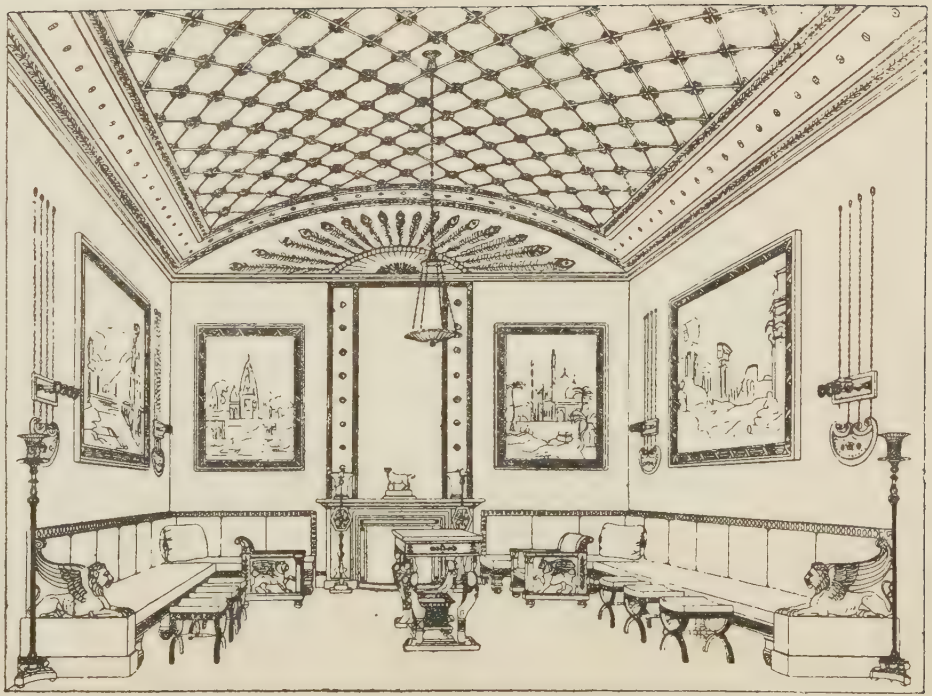
CHAIRS OF SHERATON'S LATER PERIOD
EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1810)

change in the design of English furniture, and in no individual case was this more pronounced than will be seen by comparing the drawings of Thomas



CENTRE TABLE WITH CANDLES, BY SHERATON, 1802

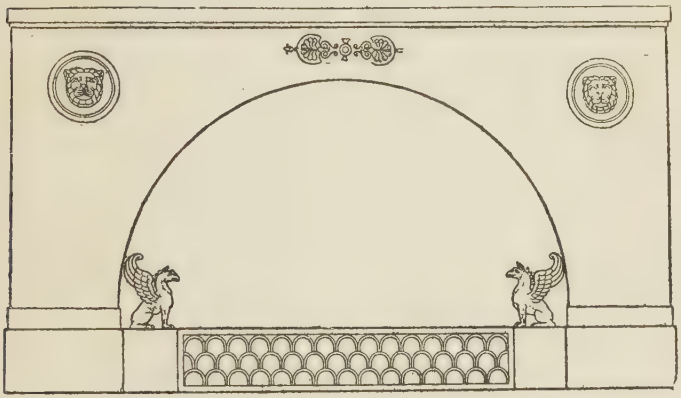
Sheraton in 1792 with those executed by him in 1802-1806. The "Canopy Bed" and some of his chairs might have figured in the books of a French



ROOM IN CLASSIC STYLE, DESIGNED BY T. HOPE, 1807

designer, so thoroughly are they of *le style de l'Empire.* The illustration given here of a centre table with candles, shows this very clearly.

But this was only a sign of the times, and by no means peculiar to Sheraton. I have reproduced an old print in my possession of "the design of a room in classic style by Thomas Hope, Architect, in 1807," and also the design of a mantelpiece, by the same hand. From the former it will be seen that all the furniture, chairs, tables, sofa, pedestals, as



MANTELPIECE, BY T. HOPE, 1807

well as the decorations on the walls, are modelled on the lines of antique classicalism, with Egyptian deities as mounts and ornaments, and the mantelpiece is strictly in accordance with this taste.

There was also a book of designs published in 1808 by George Smith, upholder to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, in which not only the style of the furniture but the names of the articles, such as "Escritoire," "Library fauteuil," "Jardinière," "Dejeuné-table," have been also taken from across the Channel.

The dining-table, made like two half-round pier tables, with slabs for insertion to increase its length, was altered in 1800, owing to the invention by Gillow of the "telescope" table, and Sheraton in his "Cabinet Dictionary," published in 1803, refers to this as the "patent," as distinguished from the ordinary dining-table. There are also many notes in this useful work of reference which show the alteration in the fashion of furniture about this time. Writing of "inlaying," he says, "a very expensive mode of decorating furniture used in the cabinet making of *twenty and thirty* years back—the *present* mode of inlaying with brass is more durable, and looks well let into the black woods of any kind. They begin now to put it on the edges of some particular mahogany work."

Again, under a heading of "Sattin" wood, he writes, "very much in request these twenty years past," from which we may infer that it was still a fashionable material.

Of sideboards he says, "the most fashionable sideboards at present are those without cellarets or any kind of drawers, having massy ornamented legs and moulded frames."

The inlaying of furniture by brass, mentioned by Sheraton, was very characteristic of this time. Seddon and Co., who in 1803 were carrying on a large business in Dover Street, Piccadilly, but who afterwards moved to Aldersgate Street; Snell, of Hanover Street and Albemarle Street, also Dowbiggin, the predecessor of Hollands, made excellent furniture of this kind. Rosewood was largely used, and the scroll designs and honeysuckle ornament in brass made an effective relief. Windsor Castle was decorated and furnished by the

Seddons, and at the death of King George IV their account was disputed, the result being a reduction of £30,000, which rendered them unable to pay their creditors in full. Seddon and Co. also furnished Salesmere, Tunbridge Wells, throughout, for the grandfather of the Captain Terry to whom reference has already been made, and he has inherited some of this furniture. It is as a rule of excellent mahogany, rich in figure, and of first-rate workmanship, doors opening and shutting, and drawers pulling out as easily and satisfactorily as when they were made nearly a hundred years ago. When rosewood is used, it is the dark shade which is termed "black" in Haig and Chippendale's bill, and inlaid with brass ornamental work which has already been noted as characteristic of this time, that is, the first twenty years of the nineteenth century.

The founder of Morant's firm, Howard and Son, Miles and Edwards, whom the Hindleys succeeded, all made furniture in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and it was good solid substantial work, which to-day is finding very appreciative buyers. In the South Kensington collection is a rather heavy mahogany sofa, which has been selected for illustration as a representative piece of the period.

The massive furniture made of good solid mahogany, ornamented with the well carved heads and feet of lions, and having the edges of the table tops enriched by what is termed a "gadroon edging," is the characteristic furniture which we generally ascribe to Gillows of the first half of the nineteenth century. One still finds in some of the older clubs, such as the Senior United Service, the

Conservative and other contemporary club houses, also some of the Halls of the City Livery Companies, such as the Goldsmiths' Hall in Foster Lane, furniture of this description. In private houses it has been gradually replaced by more fashionable designs, either absolutely modern, or else that which is really or apparently, old. I have shown, in the previous chapter, that Gillows did not confine themselves to this particular kind of furniture. It is somewhat heavy, but it certainly fulfils two of the first requisites of good furniture, in that it is both comfortable and durable.

Early Victorian

Of this period of our furniture, as of everything else in which good taste is a factor, perhaps the least that is said the better. It is a style, or the absence of one, which has no admirers, and of which neither collectors nor furnishers of taste care to have representative specimens.

It is the time of the worst rococo and baroque treatment of wood made into furniture, and may be said to have come as a reaction from the Empire style, after the monarchy was re-established in France, and adopted by our English makers with "bad translations."

There was also some attempt at a revival of the Gothic taste about this time, and the Mansion House in the City, which was refurnished somewhere about 1840, contains some gilt furniture which makes this apparent.

Taste in England was at such a low ebb about this time that a Royal Commission was appointed by Government in 1841 to report upon the best way to promote the Fine Arts in this country.

In 1851, after some two years of preparation, in which the Prince Consort took a very important part, and the greatest personal interest, there came the great International Exhibition, the turning point of taste in England.

In my "History of Furniture" I have given a representative illustration of the contributory exhibit made by every manufacturing country of any importance to this "Great World's Show," and those who are interested in taking note of the phases of change through which the design of English and Continental furniture have passed since about 1820 are referred to the notes and illustrations there given. I do not propose to go over the ground again here, except to say that for a time we seemed to have lost the excellent school of the Adams and of the late eighteenth-century manufacturers described in the previous chapter, and to have wandered about seeking fresh ideas.

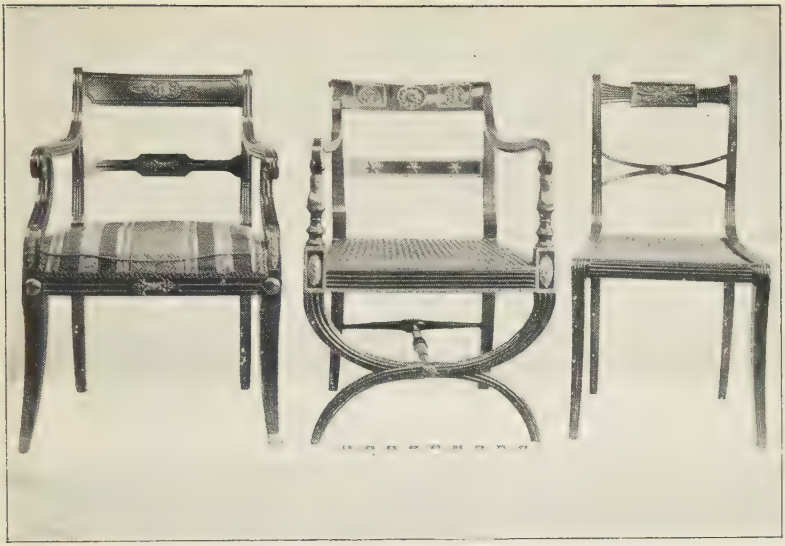
Not only did the year 1851 give us the great International Exhibition, but it also gave us the beginning of another great and more permanent institution, which has had and is still having a very valuable educational effect upon both the producer and the purchaser of furniture; I mean the South Kensington Museum, the title of which has lately been changed to that of Victoria and Albert. Then, in 1862, there was another International Exhibition, followed by one in Paris five years later, and with these and other influences at work the education of designer, manufacturer, and of the customer or purchaser grew apace, and from about 1851 there has been a constant advance in taste and knowledge of all art matters in England.

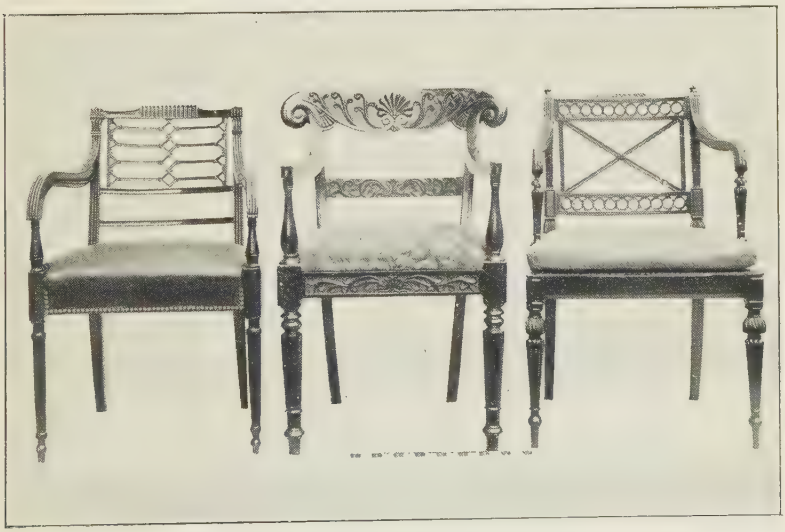
For those of us who are still too young to remember, or for those with long experience, but short memories, it may be as well to recall some of the features of the furniture in England of fifty years ago.

Something has already been said in the first part of this chapter of the sideboard so fashionable in 1803. As the century advanced, so did the character of this important article of household equipment, alter from what was really a side table to a massive and elaborate piece of furniture capable of being made the *pièce de résistance* of a large room.

Soon after the side-table period, our grandfathers used what was called the pedestal sideboard, or two pedestals connected by a table. Then later, as large sheets of plate glass were able to be produced for the first time in history, it became the fashion to have these large reflecting mirrors fitted into the backs of the sideboards as well as over the chimney-pieces and between the windows, and the sideboard became elaborately carved with trophies of dead game in the panels of the doors, and massive scrolls ornamented the frame at the back.

A kind of furniture consisting of light articles —work tables, screens, fancy chairs, and lamp stands—was made in *papier maché*, a material manufactured from paper pressed by machinery, then japanned and enriched with mother-of-pearl inlay. The cheffonière, too, was of this time, a piece of furniture which has now almost disappeared from our vocabulary. It was a cupboard as to its lower part enclosed by two doors, and had an upper part arranged with shelves for the





CHAIRS OF SHERATON'S LATE PERIOD
EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

SOFA OF LATE GEORGIAN PERIOD
ABOUT 1825

display of ornaments. Specimens of the genus are still to be seen in second-rate seaside furnished apartments.

But although the period of the first half of the nineteenth century was bad for taste and for art, there was undoubtedly produced by many of our best firms excellent, durable, sound, well-made mahogany furniture.

The modern craze for furniture of an earlier time seems to have banished much of this old-fashioned, comfortable furniture, and it is now chiefly in the older club houses, or in the residences of persons *ultra* conservative as to furnishings, that one still finds the roomy, low-seated mahogany chair, the substantial table and the plain, heavy book-case of this period.

A favourite form of ornamentation of the chairs was to turn the frames either spirally, or in such a way as to make them resemble a number of balls strung together. These latter have been known as "ball-frame" chairs, and they were generally made in solid rosewood, and the seats covered with needlework in beads or worsted, which our industrious great aunts preferred to lawn tennis and croquet, for the employment of their leisure.

The supports of tables were generally formed by a rather massive straight pillar, from which would radiate at the bottom, three or four scrolls each ending in an animal's foot, and the "Loo" table of this description is still occasionally to be seen in an old fashioned house, having been like other substantial furniture of this period, preserved, while more graceful, but less substantial, articles have perished.

The pole screen having a scroll frame with a

picture in worsted or wool, of a couple of King Charles spaniels, was also a prominent feature in the room of a lady of the first half of the nineteenth century.

Reproductions

As regards the reproductions of the earlier periods of English furniture, one or two firms may be mentioned whose work was so well carried out in the assimilation of the traditions of our late eighteenth-century makers, that now, with the tone of forty years upon them, they are frequently mistaken for the work of those whose designs they reproduced.

The firm of Wright and Mansfield about the time of the Paris 1867 Exhibition established a great reputation for satinwood furniture, and there is now in the Bethnal Green Museum an important cabinet enriched with plaques of Wedgwood's jasper ware, purchased by our Government at the exhibition.

Jackson and Graham, and the writer's father and partner under the style of Litchfield and Radclyffe, reproduced the designs of sixteenth-century Italian ornamental furniture. Rhodes, of Nixon and Rhodes of Oxford Street, Toms and Luscombe of Bond Street, made good reproductions of French marqueterie and of boullework, and although these firms are named because their work came prominently under the writer's notice, there were many others whose reproductions of earlier models are now frequently described and sold for genuine old pieces.

Remarks on New Work

This book being written with the intention of helping the reader to select old furniture of the kinds for which he has any predilection, I do not propose to go further than the time of these reproductions of, say, some forty years ago. In another work I have said more of the later period of the aesthetic movement initiated by William Morris and his school, and later still of the Arts and Crafts Society promoted by Walter Crane and other artists, which is still doing good work. The best of this modern work will some day be sought after by the collector, but to-day the purchaser of the old, must go further even if perchance he fare worse.

In conclusion, one may be allowed to suggest that it is in a great measure owing to the craze for buying what purports to be old English furniture, that we see in the houses of so many people flimsy rubbish that would hardly find a purchaser if it were not called old; the romance and sentiment which seem to be attached to the chairs and tables which our grandfathers and great-grandfathers are supposed to have used, is allowed to make excuse for the miserable workmanship and meretricious ornament which, if represented as modern work, would scarcely find a place in the room of any one able to afford better furniture.

Perhaps the notes and suggestions written in these chapters may help to foster a more critical faculty, and render the reader better able to judge for himself whether the furniture so glibly described as "antique," as Sheraton, Chippendale,

or by any other alluring and attractive title, is really the soundly-constructed, well-made article that it must of necessity be, to have stood the test of time and of the wear and strain to which it must have been subject, if it had as many birthdays as are imputed to it.

There is a fascinating charm in really well-designed and soundly-made old English furniture, and some knowledge and judgement in its selection is well worth the trouble of cultivating and acquiring.

CHAPTER VIII

"FAKED" FURNITURE

Definition of the word "fake"—The different kinds of reproductions—JACOBEAN CHAIRS—Old and new processes of polishing—Signs of age and comparison between old and new work—Glorification of plain pieces—Cinderella and the Fairy Princess—Description of the special enrichment of a suite of Louis XV furniture—Law of supply and demand—Legitimate restorations, and the reverse—Chippendale's mirror frames—Fret-cut ornament—SHERATON MARQUETERIE—The difference between genuine old and new inlaid furniture—Repainted satinwood.

WEBSTER'S Dictionary describes the word "to fake" as follows: "to manipulate fraudulently, so as to make an object appear better or other than it really is." I can find no other word which seems so fitting to describe the kind of furniture to which this chapter is devoted, and therefore have used an adjective to head these remarks, which is more useful than ornamental.

There is a marked difference between having to decide upon the genuineness of a specimen of pottery or porcelain, and that of a piece of furniture. In the case of the former the article is either that which it pretends to be or it is not; it is either the product of the ceramic factory the mark of which it bears, and to which it is accredited, or an imitation, but in the case of the piece of furniture it may be an imitation of several different kinds.

First of all it may be, like the ceramic forgery, a rank imitation in its entirety, the copy of some original specimen in a museum or private collection, more or less skilfully made to deceive the unwary collector. Secondly, it may be an old copy of an article made, not with any idea of deception when sold, but manufactured to order, some thirty or fifty, or perhaps a hundred years ago, for the purpose of completing a set of furniture which was insufficient for the owner's use and convenience. Imitations or reproductions of this description are in many cases exceedingly difficult to detect. The work may have been entrusted to a skilful maker and for a liberal patron, who did not grumble at the cost, then the years of constant use, the care and attention of trained servants, the dusting and rubbing, and what is termed "fair wear and tear," have, while preserving the article from destruction, added to its appearance by giving it the tone of the original from which it was copied in the first place.

Examples of this kind of reproduction frequently occur in sets of old chairs dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in pieces of supplementary furniture made to extend and enlarge the original purchase or acquisition of a small and incomplete set. Such reproductions I would term honest and straightforward, and yet in estimating the value and authenticity of a set of chairs or of a quantity of furniture used as a suite, it becomes necessary to separate the originals from the copies. In some cases, of course, this would be comparatively easy, if the newer work were inefficiently done, but I am assuming for the purpose of these notes that the reproductions have been well and skilfully made.

Let us imagine, for instance, that a set of old Jacobean oak dining-room chairs have to be critically examined for the purpose of deciding which are really of old seventeenth-century workmanship, and which are reproductions, made as I have suggested, not for the purpose of deception, but for the use of a former owner.

In the first place some points of difference will be noted between the methods used by the Jacobean joiner and those of his more modern representative. The oaken pegs which secure the tenons into the mortises will be evident in the old work and omitted from the new. Unless the reproductions have been made more than fifty or sixty years the mode of finishing and polishing will be different. The old process of polishing was effected by a coating of beeswax and turpentine, brought to a fine surface by hard and continuous rubbing. The old-fashioned term "elbow grease" perhaps colloquially explains the kind of friction required to give furniture that fine polish, which woodwork treated by the ancient process was capable of having produced upon its surface. The process called "French polishing" entails much less work, by filling up the grain of the wood with a preparation composed of shellac, methylated spirits and other ingredients, the result being much thinner and less lasting. An artificial surface is thus given to the wood, which is easily marked and dulls, and requires to be renewed by fresh applications of polish.

It may be remarked in passing that when French polish is intended to represent the older process, its glossy surface is dulled by rubbing in pumice powder, or by other artificial means, but never can the same effect be obtained, as by continual fric-

tion on the surface of wood treated by the older method. There will be a rich warm tone on the old work which the new will lack. It is difficult to describe exactly the difference between the appearance of the surface of really good old furniture, and that which is of much more recent manufacture, but those who know anything of old bronzes, and appreciate the tone which collectors term "patina," will understand my meaning. It is also a fact, well known to experts, that oak stained darker to match old work becomes lighter after a few years, it will therefore either show this lighter shade of colour, or, if restrained, the effect of the fresh process will be apparent.

In the old chairs there will also be evidences of repairs rendered necessary by time and wear—a new rail, a repaired arm, a strengthened back, with the marks of splicing and fitting the new work into the original. More important, however, than all these differences we shall notice, if we examine critically, that the carving on the original chairs shows more of the *mind* of the craftsman, more of the "fancy" of the carver, and less of the purely mechanical skill of the workman who had to make "matches" or copies.

I think it was Ruskin who used an expression which seems to me so full of the meaning that I am trying to explain, "*endeavour* in every line." There will also be little irregularities and even eccentricities in the old work which are missing in the copies.

Perhaps enough has been said with regard to this particular hypothetical set of chairs, but while upon the subject of new and of old carved work it may be convenient to point out that with all really

good old work, as distinguished from ordinary carving, there is an amount of feeling and spirit in the old, which the modern lacks. If foliage or scrollwork be represented, one sees more play in the leaves, the berries, the flowers; the work is not on the same dead level, but some parts are in higher relief than others. If there are bands or ribands, as in the old Elizabethan strapwork, one strap or riband seems actually to pass under or over the other, and not to be merely part of a pattern or design copied from a working drawing. The effect is to convey by means of the carver that which the designer really intended, and probably this was caused by the designer and carver in the old Jacobean days being one and the same man. In later times, with modern and more economical organization of labour, in factories and workshops, different sets of craftsmen are allotted their respective parts, and this division of labour and separation of interests must inevitably bring about a result that can never be quite the same as when the hand executes that which the brain has conceived.

But to return to our different kinds of "faked" furniture. Perhaps the most subtle kind of imitation is the glorification of a plain simple article of domestic furniture into what is termed "a collector's piece." Connoisseurs of ancient silver well know how such simple pieces of old plate, as a chamber candlestick, have been converted into magnificent urns or vases, the old square base bearing the hall-mark of Queen Anne's reign, with the whole superstructure added, thus giving an artificial value of some three to five pounds per ounce to manufactured silver that would have fairly re-

paid the maker at less than one quarter the price.

Now with furniture there is not even the initial difficulty of the hall-mark to overcome; the artist in "faked" furniture has but to purchase a genuine old chest of drawers, reveneer the front, sides, and ends with satinwood and marqueterie of the Sheraton type, while the back and the insides of the drawers remain untouched, to prove the veritable age of the glorified chest which has now become "a fine old English commode of Sheraton's make." If the design be more ambitious, and the shape of the original piece lends itself to the scheme, a superstructure may be added, thus converting our "Cinderella" of the plain bedroom chest, into the "Fairy Princess" of a cabinet of Robert Adam's design. Sometimes the satinwood veneer may be painted in the style of Angelica Kauffmann or of Cipriani.

A similar treatment of simple old French furniture may be pursued, until the plain Louis XV chair of the bourgeois, becomes the *chaise de fantasie* of the rich collector. Some years ago I remember seeing in Paris a suite of furniture in course of preparation for a *grand coup*, and the *modus operandi* was so ingenious, and so artistically done that it really seemed a great pity that the end was to perpetrate a fraud. On the face of the frames of the old oak chairs, which had formerly been plain white painted furniture of the period of Louis XV, were glued and partly inserted, blocks of oak; these were afterwards carved by one of the most skilful craftsmen in Paris in the manner of really fine and costly old furniture of the period. The preparation and gilding was done according

to the old methods, the colour of the gold carefully toned, and the result was a suite of Louis XV furniture, certainly old so far as the original "carcases" of the chairs and sofa were concerned, but the carved ornamentation was entirely modern. The covering of this suite was of excellent Aubusson tapestry, and here the ingenuity and art of the French *tapissier* had brought about a wonderful result. Old tapestry seats and backs had been found, and these had been reworked with infinite skill, giving in place of the threadbare foundation, a charming ground colour of Rose du Barri, while the subject centres had been well restored at the Aubusson works.

This suite of furniture I happened to find out afterwards was sold for a large sum of money, but the cost of the work I have described, was so great that the profit on the outlay of money, added to the long tedious waiting for completion, did not strike me as unreasonable. The chief point was that it allowed the dealer for whom this work was carried out, the opportunity of supplying his client's wants in a way that he could not otherwise have done.

The law of supply and demand is bound to produce results of this kind. Rich people are not content with finding a chair here, a sofa there, and waiting for years to complete the furnishing of a room, when perhaps it is intended to entertain distinguished guests during the coming autumn or winter.

Modern furniture will not be accepted, Louis Quinze is the mode, and Louis Quinze it must be —and price being no great barrier, the speculative and not over-scrupulous dealer finds his oppor-

tunity, and every one is at least temporarily satisfied.

I have here given some particulars of this suite of furniture because it came within my personal knowledge through my accidentally entering a workshop in Paris which I was not intended to see. It is of course somewhat exceptional; it involved a large sum of money and a great deal of careful supervision, but it is described in order that the reader may see to what an extent the ingenuity of man is fostered and encouraged by the enormous prices very wealthy people are willing to give for furniture of the most fashionable kind.

When this is understood and realized, it induces a wholesome suspicion of the richly-mounted and decorated furniture, which seems to spring into abundance as the fashion of the day creates the demand. Let the craze be for Chippendale, for satinwood, for First Empire or Queen Anne, and as genuine specimens of the richer kinds become unprocurable, every plain old battered hulk is pressed into the service for conversion into a saleable article.

Now there are many cases in which, to my mind, the restorations by making new the missing or damaged parts, the improvement of an old piece by the addition of suitable mounts, or even the alteration of a design so as to make the piece of furniture suitable for modern use, is quite legitimate and desirable, only one likes to know something of what has been done. The question of how far legitimate improvement and restoration may go, before it becomes illegitimate and fraudulent is rather a nice point, but it certainly is annoying and disappointing to buy as a genuine old

specimen of Chippendale or Sheraton that which has been specially prepared for the unwary collector.

It is with the hope of preventing my readers from some of these disappointments, that these notes are written, and having pointed out the most subtle form of "faking" furniture, I now propose to endeavour to assist the amateur to form a sound judgement as to the genuineness or reverse of the specimen offered to him.

What has already been written as to old and new carved work applies particularly to Chippendale furniture. No carving of the rococo style affected by Chippendale and his contemporary makers, can be spirited and vigorous, showing the signs of a master hand, unless the carver has had plenty of material to cut away. If, therefore, we examine a riband-pattern chair said to be by Chippendale, and notice that in order to obtain as much effect as possible out of a shallow mahogany frame, the work is cramped and flat, we may take it that, although the details be carefully carried out, and the chair may show signs of undoubted age, it is not one of Chippendale's. This applies also to his mirror frames, the carved cornices of his bookcases, cabinets and other work, but more emphatically to those rococo mirror frames generally associated with his name, so many of which one sees offered for sale, from the cheap and quite modern productions, of little or no artistic merit, to the more carefully and better made copies of some twenty-five or thirty years ago.

The old frames made in Chippendale's workshops show so much more variety in the different thicknesses or depths of the carved ornament; for instance, the head of a scroll may stand out five

or six inches from the wall, while the centre of the same scroll has a projection of less than two inches; the limbs of the quaint Chinaman on the top and the curious stork-like birds at the sides, show this variety of relief, which gives a play and fancy to the design that cannot be produced by using less wood.

It stands to reason, of course, that the methods pursued by Chippendale necessitated a great deal more costly preparation; the wood to be made ready for the carver, must be glued up in different layers, or the whole frame would warp and buckle; then it must be obvious that there would be double the amount of work caused by having all this material to cut away, only leaving the full thickness where the design required a greater depth. This kind of carving, however, has its reward by giving a spirit to the work which can be obtained by no other means, and when such vigorous, spirited carving appeals to our artistic perception, when the signs of age approximating to that of Chippendale's time are apparent, by the examination of the old mahogany, if the furniture be of that wood, or by the appearance of the gilding if it be a frame of the kind, then we may feel satisfied that such a chair or such a frame is by Chippendale, or at least by a worthy pupil, and our opinion may be further confirmed by finding the design in his published "Director."

Another class of so-called Chippendale furniture should be viewed with scepticism, the kind that depends for its enrichment upon fret-cut ornament. Two or three veneers of mahogany, glued together, and pierced by a band-saw with a geometrical pattern, is a cheap form of ornamentation to pass

muster as a characteristic decoration of Chippendale's furniture; it can be added to the plain mahogany fronts of chests of drawers, and to the friezes and legs of tables, but it should be critically examined.

Chippendale certainly did occasionally use fret-cut galleries to some of his tables, but the work of the saw was afterwards carefully finished by the carver, removing all trace of the machine-cut pattern, whereas in the modern fretwork one can generally detect the raw edge of the tool which cut through the veneers.

With regard to inlaid furniture, it may be noticed that as a rule the pieces of cabinet work "glorified" by new veneers, are of a much more ornate and decorative character than the absolutely genuine old specimens.

Sheraton and his contemporaries depended much more upon the beautiful markings of their well-chosen veneers, for the artistic effect of their inlaid furniture, than upon meretricious and abundant design of inlay. When, therefore, we see elaborate vases holding bouquets of flowers and standing on scroll-pattern pedestals, with a margin of running scroll-work, trophies of musical instruments, and the like, we may view them with the greatest suspicion. It has become so much more difficult to obtain veneers of rich figure, that the modern cabinet maker cannot produce the effect he desires without recourse to an inlaid design. With the large demand for marqueterie furniture of such a fashionable description as that of Sheraton's design, it becomes profitable to produce by machinery the inlaid patterns popularly supposed to be designed by him, and these can therefore be obtained by

cabinet makers ready made, only requiring to be inserted into the rather poor veneer of satinwood or mahogany the timber merchant has supplied. In the same way the minor parts of marqueterie decoration, such as shells, paterae, stringings and bandings, may all be turned out by machinery, and although when these are introduced into the veneered piece of furniture of the kind and form affected by Sheraton, it becomes very decorative, still the ornamentation is meretricious and mechanical, and generally the constructive cabinet work is of a flimsy character.

Now a really old piece of furniture will probably show no ornamentation but the oval panel of a richly-figured piece of satinwood, in a "surround" of figured Spanish mahogany, perhaps a little patera in each corner of the conventionalized honeysuckle, or an oval shell; but this will be more thoroughly satisfactory, although so much more simple. It will become more and more precious, or to use a hackneyed expression, "it grows on one," while the more ornamental impostor becomes less and less satisfactory upon a longer acquaintance until it has to be turned out by the collector who has cultivated his taste until he has "grown out" of the indiscretions and follies of his earlier purchases.

Before dismissing the subject of faked Sheraton furniture it may be mentioned that a good deal of the painted satinwood has been redecorated by new work. To judge of this, one must be guided by the ordinary rules which govern one in all painted work. Modern painting on furniture is generally so inferior that it can be detected by an intelligent amateur. In some notes on painted and

enamelled furniture at the end of Chapter VI, the reader will find more information about this kind of work.

The mounting of plain furniture is another form of glorification. Sometimes an old French piece of good shape, such as a *bombé*-fronted commode, may be picked up for a small price, and gilt bronze mountings added until it is turned into a rich specimen of the Louis XV period. These mounts may be good, bad, or indifferent, and if they are really finely-chased and finished, and heavily gilt, the cost is generally so great that a high price must be obtained to recompense the mounter. The question of the genuineness of metal mounts is so difficult that only an expert of great experience can decide between really good modern ones which have acquired a tone or patina, and the original work. The amateur will find this a very difficult problem to solve.

The difference in value is very considerable, for whereas the original mounts were produced first from wax models, then plaster moulds from which the casts were taken, to be subsequently chased and gilt, the copies have been cast from patterns, and finished at more or less cost, according to circumstances. There is, moreover, one kind of mount which the amateur should be careful to guard himself against, and that is the "galvano," or copy of an old mount produced by the galvanic battery. By means of this modern scientific method of production, one can obtain by electric deposit a counterpart of the old mount, and the cost will be a fifth or a tenth part of that of the original. "Galvanos" are generally made in imitation of Louis Seize or First Empire mounts, the flatness of their sur-

faces rendering them adaptable for the process. If the mount be removed from the piece of furniture, it will be easy to see the curious granulated appearance of the back part, which is quite different from that of the mount cast in the mould. Galvano mounts are artistic and effective, only they should be bought and paid for as such, not as carefully finished skilled hand work.

The making up of old fragments of carved oak, parts of chests, bedsteads, and odd panels, into chimney-pieces and important cabinets or sideboards, is to some extent a legitimate adaptation of old relics to a useful purpose, and only becomes objectionable when it is done without sufficient knowledge on the part of the adapter to produce a harmonious result, or with fraudulent intent. In the chapter on Jacobean furniture the reader will notice that more has been said on this subject, and he must be guided by the circumstances of each case in accepting or rejecting a composite piece. If, for instance, he has a fancy for an old oak sideboard, and is quite aware that such an article of the period as he requires does not exist, he can purchase one which contains portions of good old work put together with knowledge and intelligence, and thus obtain a satisfactory piece of furniture, although, from an antiquarian point of view, it is not strictly correct.

There is, however, a great deal of so-called old oak to which much more exception must be taken. The dark, almost black colour of what the small dealer is pleased to term "antique" oak, covers all kinds of bad work, miserable construction, worse carving, and, in fact, all the faults that furniture can be guilty of, and when to these glaring

misdemeanours in faking old furniture the false worm-holes are added, there is little to be said, except to urge the amateur to leave it severely alone, and in preference to purchase the plainest of unobjectionable and unpretentious modern oak furniture, which some of our manufacturing firms supply at a moderate cost.

Perhaps it may not be out of place to quote here some amusing and yet almost painful evidence of the great extent to which the faking of old oak must be carried, when it is possible for men to earn a living by imitating such signs of age as the worm-holes.

Only a short time ago I read in the daily papers the report of a case in which a female witness attended to excuse her husband's coming to the Court on account of his illness. "What is your husband?" asked the judge. "If you please, my Lord, he is a worm-eater." "A what?" said the judge, and the answer was repeated, "I don't wonder that he is too ill to attend," dryly remarked his lordship. The woman then explained that what she intended to convey to the Court, was not that her husband preferred this peculiar kind of diet, but that he obtained his living by giving to so-called "antique" furniture the appearance of its being worm-eaten.

In the foregoing remarks I have tried to put my readers on their guard against some of the tricks and dodges of manipulating furniture to meet the fashion and craze of the day, for buying old things. Some of these are transparent, and should be detected by ordinary observation and common sense; some are so cleverly and skilfully carried out, that only experience can judge

between the true and the false, and while some people have a natural turn for "spotting" a good thing and detecting a "duffer," others are naturally credulous, and either too careless or too negligent to take the trouble to critically examine what they buy.

CHAPTER IX

HINTS AND CAUTIONS

Buying and collecting—SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY OAK—Suggestions for a dining room—A composite sideboard—A Jacobean side table, chairs and accessories—EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH—Bookcases—Points for consideration—The inadvisability of old chairs for dining-room use—LIBRARY FURNITURE—Suggestions for bedrooms—Comparison between old and new marqueterie—FRENCH REPRODUCTIONS—BUYING ON A WARRANTY—Value of a correct invoice—THE BARGAIN HUNTER—An amusing instance of the biter bit—THE DEALERS—Remarks upon the dealers—BUYING AT AUCTION—Watching sales—Buying on commission—Best method of making a collection.

THE following suggestions are written as the result of more than thirty years' experience, with the hope that they may be of some service to amateurs of old furniture. Where an opinion is expressed which bears upon legal matters, such views as are given, must be taken, not as those of an amateur lawyer, but simply as the conclusion arrived at after listening to many summings-up and decisions by judge and jury, in some of the numerous cases in which it has been my lot to attend as expert witness.

In the chapter on "faked" furniture a few of the many pitfalls for the unwary, have been commented upon, and if the reader will accept this chapter as connected with the preceding one it will be unnecessary to go over much of the same ground.

The "collector" of old furniture is scarcely the

correct description of a person who likes to buy it, because very few have houses which are roomy enough to contain a sufficient number of specimens of any particular kind, to deserve the name of a collection. Examples of different ceramic factories may be held in some half-a-dozen cabinets, which may consist of some fifty different kinds, and perhaps five hundred various specimens, but there can be no corresponding assemblage of furniture, without a huge mansion to accommodate it.

I will assume for the purpose of these notes that the reader has the wish to have a dining-room furnished with seventeenth-century oak, a library of eighteenth-century mahogany, a drawing-room of either French or English work, with a mixture of personally collected items found in his journeyings at home and abroad, and that instead of the bedroom suites "as advertised," he prefers to equip his various bedrooms with sound old English chests of drawers, "tall-boys," wardrobes, and corresponding accessories. This arrangement can be varied to suit particular tastes, but my notes will serve as well.

Seventeenth-century oak

Now with the dining-room we have a difficulty to begin with, in the *pièce de résistance*, the sideboard. This article, as such, did not exist in Jacobean times, and therefore we must do without it. I am reminded of the wealthy manufacturer who wrote to a well-known firm ordering an "Elizabethan" hat and umbrella stand, and upon being informed that such an article was an anachronism, he wrote back to say that he must have it because

his hall was panelled and furnished with oak of that period, adding the generous postscript that he did not mind the price.

A sideboard, then, must be of a composite character. A genuine old chest, and parts of an old Jacobean bedstead are the necessary materials. Careful reference to some good drawings, so that the right mouldings may be used; and, may I add, the minimum of new carving is the next important desideratum, and if the design be well thought out, and the work skilfully done, a very satisfactory sideboard may be arranged. It should have all the conveniences of modern requirements in the way of interior cellaret fittings, drawers for napkins, shelves for glass and silver, and the genuine old parts need not be mutilated, but only mounted.

The side or serving table may be found which is really old, and the search should be persevered in until success rewards the trouble, but perhaps it would be as well to wait for the arrangement of the sideboard until this be secured, as some useful suggestion may be taken from an examination of its detailed ornament and mouldings.

Chairs of Jacobean period are also possible, but they do not "grow on the hedges," and moreover, when they are offered for sale, they must be carefully examined, and the notes in the preceding chapter may be of use in this connection.

If the room be required before these chairs can be obtained, may I suggest that rather than have imitation ones *carved*, the reader should get what are called plain leather "Cromwellian" chairs, that is, chairs with leather seats and backs edged with brass nails, only showing the plain oak wood-work of the legs and stretchers. All the rest of the chair

should be of self-coloured morocco leather, which will quarrel with nothing in the room.

For a table the best suggestion that I can offer is the purchase of an old one, and its alteration to the size required by an intelligent expert who can be recommended for this class of work. No dining-table of the Jacobean period can possibly be found capable of dining sixteen or eighteen persons, but if the room be small, and larger parties than ten or even twelve are not required, it is quite feasible to find one of the old "gate-leg" tables with two folding flaps, which when open will give a round or oval top some five to six feet in diameter. There will probably be room for an old Jacobean chest, and the room will be sufficiently furnished, so far as its complement of oak is concerned.

A picture will be more suitable than a mirror for the place of honour over the chimney-piece. I say nothing of carpets and draperies, except to suggest that an Eastern carpet cannot be amiss, and curtains of old red silk damask give a very handsome setting to the dark oak. One is tempted to think of old silver, some good Dutch pictures, Oriental china and sixteenth-century bronzes; but enough has been said without wandering too far from the immediate subject of old furniture, of which this is a handbook and not a guide to furnishing.

If there be still room for another piece of furniture, perhaps a genuine old seventeenth-century Court cupboard may be found. Nothing in the way of a Jacobean cabinet can be more decorative, and they still exist in a more or less original state.

A chimney-piece of the period in old oak is very rare, but sometimes the upper part of an old one

with richly-carved panels, may be picked up, and this should be for choice mounted on a stone lower part, the stone work, if modern, being not much carved, but composed of a moulded Jacobean arch. Occasionally when an old house is pulled down, such a stone chimney-piece may be obtained.

Eighteenth-century English Furniture

Now with regard to the purchase of old English eighteenth-century furniture—Chippendale, Sheraton, Heppelwhite and their contemporaries.

Good bookcases of the period are still to be found; an illustration is given in the chapter dealing with this class of furniture, and they exist in large and small sizes. The reader will have seen the warning against those having vases and scrolls inlaid in the mahogany or satinwood. The old ones very seldom have any marqueterie except a modest banding, a fan-shaped shaded ornament, or some paterae with shells or simple scrolls inlaid. They are, however, invariably well-made pieces of furniture, or it is quite impossible that they could have stood the wear and tear of a hundred and twenty years or more. When another century has passed over our heads where will be nineteen-twentieths of the "second-hand" or "antique"—save the mark!—"Chippendale" and "Sheraton" furniture, which to-day changes hands from dealer to amateur? It is surely a question of the survival of the fittest, and much of the furniture I have in my mind as I write these notes, will certainly NOT have survived.

It is almost impossible to inform people who are quite unacquainted with cabinet work, how to

tell the difference between a well and soundly-constructed piece of furniture, and one which is, to use a slang expression, "blown together." If, however, my readers are sufficiently keen on this subject to have waded patiently through much that has been written here and elsewhere on the subject, they must have arrived at the means of forming an opinion. An examination of the way a door opens and shuts, the same critical look at the drawers, the dovetailing of the fronts of the drawers to their sides, the recesses where the drawers come from, the flush or moulded panels of the doors, the care with which the cornice and various mouldings have been finished, will in any case be useful, and if such an examination be made with the assistance of a skilled workman, a great deal may be learned. If the bookcase doors be "quarrelled," the mouldings which form the quarrels or the tracery will be an independent piece of work, all the joins carefully mitred and made true in a workmanlike manner. I have seen many bookcases with this tracery of woodwork just *laid on* the sheet of glass which forms the panel of the door, but I *never* saw this in an old cabinet—the latter invariably having each shaped pane of glass puttied or beaded into the shaped "quarrel" from behind.

These are some of the "points" that should be considered before the bookcase is "passed sound," and the same remarks apply to the chest of drawers, the wardrobe, or any other article.

So much has been said about chairs in the preceding chapter that I will only add one suggestion, and that is that if they are intended for really hard service, such as constant dining-room use, I do not recommend the purchase of Chippendale or

Heppelwhite chairs, which are really of their make or date, for the purpose. They are not sufficiently stout to have stood the strain of a hundred and thirty or fifty years and to be still good for hard wear, and when people are dining it is ominous to hear the crack which tells of the giving way of a favourite, under the strain of a weighty and perhaps clumsy guest.

If the dining-room is to be furnished in this style, one should be content with some of the excellent reproductions made a sufficiently long time to have acquired a good tone, and then the old specimen chairs by the eighteenth-century makers can be placed in other rooms, where their use is not so constant and the strain not so severe.

But to return to the library and its furnishing with old English work. The slanting front Bureau, or the Bureau-bookcase of the time, can be easily found, either quite plain or with an ornamented cornice to the latter, a useful flap for writing, and small drawers and pigeon-holes for papers. If a pedestal or kneehole writing table be preferred, this may also be purchased, quite genuine, but it will be a great deal more costly than the bureau or bureau-bookcase, on account of its being so much more scarce. Many of the old plain ones, such as an old family solicitor of the time would have used in his business room, have been re-inlaid or ornamented by modern carving, but the plain ones have richly figured wood in their panels, and if there is any carving, it is a simple ornament to a moulding. As to these being old and sound, the remarks which have been made about the bookcases, of course apply to all furniture with drawers or doors.

The best library chairs are those with seats and backs of leather, having the "knees" and feet of mahogany, either plain or carved, visible. These were sometimes called "eared" armchairs, one of which is described in Chapter VI. For a writing chair, a well selected oval or shield-backed one by Heppelwhite or Chippendale may be selected. It is much more easy to find a single armchair for writing, which is "up to weight" for one's own use, than a whole set of eight or twelve or more for the dining-room.

As regards bedroom furniture, some of the old serpentine-fronted side-tables and sideboards make excellent dressing-tables, and genuine old toilet glasses of the period may still be found. "Overmantels" of eighteenth-century style marqueterie are to my mind abominations. They never existed in the old days, and I do not think they are an improvement. There are plenty of good Georgian carved and gilt mirrors, with lines corresponding to the kind of furniture we are now discussing, and these are in my opinion much more suitable, while the gilding is a pleasant relief to the mahogany or satinwood.

The caution already given with regard to profuse marqueterie decoration can only be repeated with emphasis when painted satinwood furniture is considered. There is really very little of this delicate and easily-spoilt furniture, that has survived the stress of the last century, and yet in every so-called "antique" dealer's show-rooms are numbers of tables and cabinets, as fresh as if they had been preserved in glass cases. One can only repeat all the remarks as to examination of the details of construction; and then, as to the painting, it would be

well to look at this with a magnifying glass, and note the old scratches and rubbings with the unmistakable signs of damage, and subsequent restoration, which *must* be traceable in a really old piece.

French Reproductions

In the chapter on French furniture something has been said about reproductions and imitations. The very high prices which are realized by genuine pieces naturally give a great incentive to manufacturers to produce; such copies are extremely difficult to detect, because it pays to expend upon them a great deal of skilful work and much ingenuity. Old plain pieces are re-inlaid, added to, and mounted; the mounts are of the correct pattern, gilt and "toned," or, as the French say, *vieillé* (aged), by chemical methods; sometimes coarse old mounts are rechased and enlivened, being made to appear much better than they really are, so that a fancy price may be obtained.

Those who collect or purchase the more expensive kinds of old French furniture of the Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI periods, should be connoisseurs of very considerable experience; it is really quite beyond the ability of an expert to impart by any amount of writing a method for deciding between a really clever "fake" and a genuine old piece. Nothing but close attention, careful examination based on long experience, can achieve this valuable knowledge. In such cases of doubt I would rather advise the amateur to call in the services of a well-known expert, pay a small fee, and get a sound opinion.

Buying old Furniture on a Warranty

Those who read the newspaper reports of actions at law which arise from disputes as to the genuineness of old furniture, will have observed that there are considerable differences and even direct contradictions in the decisions of somewhat similar cases. The description "old" has a comparative meaning. An article may be old in the sense that it is not of recent make, although a great deal more recent than the period it was represented to be at the time of sale. In the catalogues of the Hôtel Drouot, the words *dans le style* are construed quite differently from *de l'époque*, and in these two phrases lie all the difference. Then again, it has been frequently argued by learned counsel that the word Chippendale or Sheraton is what is called a *genre* term, and does not mean that the particular example is by either of those makers. I have heard this repeatedly, and the hoary-headed example of a "Venetian" blind trotted out, the advocate asking with injured innocence whether this must necessarily mean that the blind was made in Venice? So far as my experience of courts of law has taught me, it would appear that the whole question comes to this, what kind of representation was made at the time of sale? Was the purchaser induced to buy by reason of false and fraudulent statements? The question of price, too, is an important consideration, although I remember hearing a certain judge say that the price did not matter. It seems, however, obvious to our common sense that if, for instance, a certain representation had been made at the time of the sale of a so-called Chippendale chair, and the price was, say, ten pounds, the aggrieved pur-

chaser would have a much slenderer chance of recovering his money than if for the same article (assuming it to be a sham) a hundred pounds had been given.

The moral of all this is that in transactions of any considerable amount, the purchaser should be careful to insist that the statements made by the vendor should be reduced to writing on the invoice. When I wrote my first guide to collectors of Pottery and Porcelain twenty-five years ago, I added this suggestion to a chapter of hints and cautions, and it is no exaggeration to say that in hundreds of cases I have known bad bargains to be cancelled owing to this precaution having been adopted. If the vendor, whether dealer or amateur, be honest, it can be no hardship or injustice to ask him to write that which he has stated; "Litera scripta manet," is a useful maxim, and if there be an attempt to deceive, it is often "check and mate."

What can one do if the injured amateur comes for advice and assistance, and when asked for the descriptive invoice of the article which is the cause of all the trouble, we find "an inlaid and richly-mounted table" or "a French marqueterie commode with mounts of gilt bronze *in the style* of Louis XV"? Probably the price is rather more than double the value of the obviously modern copy, but then it is also about one-tenth the price of what an old one of the period would be worth.

The Bargain Hunter

Only too frequently the keen desire for a bargain has really been the cause of the disappointment.

People who would in the ordinary affairs of life scorn to take advantage of an ignorant man, seem only too delighted at being able to "pick up" a bargain from a "little man in the country" who was thought to be wanting in knowledge, and they are very indignant at finding that it is their own knowledge, not only of furniture but of human nature, that was so lamentably deficient. I remember, a great many years ago, a certain dealer had sold for several thousand pounds some furniture, china and bronzes to a gentleman who had been Lord Mayor of the City of London, on the misrepresentation that the goods were the property of the widow of a French officer who had been killed in the Franco-German war, and who, being in urgent need of money, was obliged to sacrifice her property for whatever sum she could obtain. The purchaser thereupon made offers of sums which would have been ridiculously small had the articles been genuine, but which were about three times the value of such as they actually were. My father was consulted by the purchaser's solicitors to make a valuation of the goods, to assist in recovering some of the money paid, and in resisting payment of the balance. Now this gentleman had presided at meetings for the assistance of widows and orphans who were in distressed circumstances through the war, and it was pointed out to him that if the case were carried into court the searching cross-examination by counsel, would bring into publicity the fact of his helping in his public capacity, while in his private capacity he was obtaining the poor widow's goods at less than market value. Of course there was really no widow in the case; the goods were imported from Paris to feed the

appetite of the "collector." This is one of many instances in which the buyer is almost as much to blame as the seller. So many rich people have a keen desire to get the better of the dealer in transactions where *articles de vertu* are concerned, and, if one may offer a well-meant suggestion, it would be to curb that natural bent, and be prepared to pay a fair price to a man of good reputation for a really good article.

The Dealers

It would of course be invidious and impossible to mention any dealers by name, but there are many in London and in the provinces who are as upright and honourable in their dealings as men can be found, who are willing to guarantee that every article they sell is as represented, and as invoiced, and if by chance any mistake should have been made, to set it right, even at a serious monetary loss to themselves. Unfortunately there are, of course, dealers who are not so scrupulous, and against whom one would like to warn the inexperienced amateur; and there are also a great many who are really so ignorant that one is amazed at their utter want of knowledge of the business which they carry on.

Perhaps I may relate one of the most amusing instances of this ignorance. Some years ago I was acting as one of the arbitrators in a case of compensation for destruction by fire of some valuable furniture at Bristol. The Sun Fire Office retained my services, and a local valuer acted for the insured. As usual in these cases a member of the Bar sat as umpire. Both sides were represented

by learned counsel and called witnesses. Amongst the articles claimed for, was a "fourteenth-century bureau," which was valued at £300. I pointed out that we might take it, without prejudice to value, that such an article as a fourteenth-century bureau was a contradiction in terms; what the insured probably meant to infer was a Louis XIV bureau, as there was no word in the English language to denote such an article of furniture before the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century. A witness for the insured, a certain dealer in "antique" furniture, gave his evidence as to value, and was then asked by the counsel for the "Sun" whether, having heard my explanation of the mistake in putting the century for the king in the schedule, that affected his view of the value? The answer, after thinking the matter well over, was, "Well, provided that both gentlemen lived about the same time, I don't see as it does." As a matter of fact, the bureau was evidently, from some charred remains, an old Dutch piece worth about £10 to £15.

Buying at Auction

There are bargain hunters other than the kind of one I have already referred to, and some of them delight to attend auction sales, and buy under the hammer. This is a very dangerous pastime, and, unless the amateur be unusually well armed by considerable experience, it is one that I should warn him against. Now and again some measure of success may attend the adventure, but it is a kind of experiment that brings more disappointment than satisfaction.

If the reader wishes to gain some knowledge of values, he cannot do better than watch carefully the sales at Christie's or any other respectable auctioneers, and if when he "views" the sale he should make a careful examination of a piece that he fancies, it is excellent practice to form an estimate of its value, and watch the result on the day of sale. I know of no better plan to gain valuable experience.

As to the actual purchase of the piece in question, I would advise him to seek the assistance of a dealer of repute, to act for him in the purchase; he will get the benefit of a valuable opinion, and moreover, if he does eventually purchase it, he will probably do so for a great deal less than if he endeavoured to save the commission.

As a matter of fact, in no case is a higher commission charged than five per cent. on the amount, and where the sum is considerable an arrangement can be made for a smaller percentage. It is well worth the payment, if the commission be loyally and faithfully performed.

Another plan which I suggest as even better in many cases, is to attend the sale, watch quietly who is the buyer of the lot, and then, if he be in the trade, make a bargain with him for a fair profit on his purchase. Many of the best dealers are only too willing to take a small benefit for a quick sale such as this, in some cases ten or fifteen per cent. on the auction price, and the amateur obtains for this very moderate advance not only the benefit of the dealer's experience and knowledge, but he has an opportunity of buying deliberately and in cold blood, instead of hastily and under the influence of excitement.

Many of the best collections of furniture and of other works of art, formed by amateurs, have been made by following out in practice some such rules as I have suggested. For instance, the famous Jones bequest in the Victoria and Albert Museum, was a collection formed chiefly on the advice and through the agency of a well-known dealer named King, who died some twenty or twenty-five years ago, and the value now of that collection is probably more than three times that which the late Mr. Jones paid for it. Other instances could be quoted, but as the dealers who have acted, and are still acting for their principals, are in business, one cannot name them for obvious reasons.

The hints and cautions given here are intended more for the average purchaser of quaint old furniture, than for collectors on such a scale as that of Mr. John Jones; but to some extent the same advice holds good. Establish such business relations with one or two dealers of repute, that they can be visited without expecting a purchase to be always effected; make use of their advice and services either for private buying or for their attendance at sales on your behalf, obtain a properly descriptive invoice of every purchase, and as experience and knowledge are gradually acquired, the collection of specimens of old furniture may be made not only a very fascinating hobby, but a judicious investment of capital.

CHAPTER X

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS

A GREAT many foreign and unusual terms frequently occur in catalogues, and also in other printed and written descriptions of Art furniture. Some of these are Anglicized words; others are those which, although familiar to experts and connoisseurs, are quite puzzling to the general reader, because they have a meaning as applied to Art and to furniture which is quite different from their ordinary dictionary definition.

The writer has been so frequently asked to explain what is meant by such terms as a "cartel" clock, a "bergère," a "guéridon," or a "tambour front," that he has thought a useful purpose would be served by giving a short glossary in alphabetical order of some of these terms.

The descriptions are in many cases quoted from the "Stanford Dictionary of Anglicized Words," edited by Mr. Fennell, Fairholt's "Dictionary of Terms in Art," and other similar useful works of reference, but it is singular that in so many instances there is no such meaning as an art expert would employ, to be found in our best and most modern dictionaries. In these cases the writer is responsible for such explanations as have been learned by experience.

There are some other subjects connected with the buying and selling of old furniture, including a description of the notorious "knocking out" system, which may be conveniently noticed under this heading of "Notes and Explanations," and therefore they have been added to the glossary.

Amorini (It.). An Italian term for cupids, frequently used in descriptions of French furniture the panels of which are of Vernis Martin (q.v.), and painted with groups of cupids, or of English satinwood painted furniture, similarly decorated.

Armoire (Fr.). A large wardrobe or movable cupboard, with doors and shelves, especially one which is inclosed or shut in with doors from base to cornice, and is simple and roomy in design. In the Jones bequest in the Victoria and Albert Museum of South Kensington, there is a fine Boulle armoire. A pair, somewhat similar, in the famous Hamilton Palace sale in 1882 realized £12,075; but plain oak armoires may be purchased for quite small sums. The carved oak armoires of Normandy are well known to collectors. The word comes from Ambry, a church cupboard.

Astragal (Eng. fr. Lat.). A small moulding, plain or carved, round the top and bottom of columns, or between the main portions of the architrave.

In cabinet work this term is generally used to describe the small moulding running from top to bottom of one of a pair of doors, overlapping one door, and so making a finish and excluding the dust.

Baldachino (Ital.). A tent-like covering of wood, stone, or metal, originally signifying a piece of furniture to cover sacred things, or the seats of

kings and distinguished persons, but the term has lately had a much more extended use.

Baroque (Fr.). A term used to describe ornamental designs of a florid and incongruous character, produced for the sake of lavish effect, and indicative of a taste for display rather than for true and appropriate decoration. See *Rococo*.

Bergère. See *Chaise bergère.*

Boulle, Boule, or *Buhl.* A special kind of marqueterie composed of tortoiseshell and brass, invented by André Charles Boulle during the reign of Louis XIV, and applied to the cabinet work of the time. A full description of this will be found in Chapter III.

Break-front. This term is frequently found in sale catalogues, and means that the bookcase, cabinet, or wardrobe has the long straight line of its frontage interrupted or broken by the centre compartment being slightly in advance, or slightly in recess, of the two sides. For instance, a bookcase eight feet wide would probably have four doors, the two end ones inclosing compartments, which would be two inches less in depth than the centre compartment inclosed by the other two doors.

Buffet (Fr). A sideboard used for the display of plate. The old Gothic buffet was so disposed that the panels of the upper part concealed drawers which might hold napkins or small articles of plate.

Bureau (Fr.), pl. *Bureaux* or *Bureaus.* A chest of drawers fitted with a writing board.

Cabriole (Fr.). Literally a curvet, leap or caper, and therefore applied to that which is fantastically curved. Both Chippendale and Heppelwhite speak of "cabriole" chairs. The word is used now to

designate the kind of leg of chair or table which is of scroll form, sometimes carved on knee and toe, or ending in claw-and-ball foot, or it may be without carving.

Carlton Table. A writing table designed by Sheraton, and probably so named out of compliment to the Prince of Wales. It is straight in front, but the back is rounded, making thus a D-shaped top. The rounded or back part was raised some seven or eight inches above the flat, and fitted with receptacles for letters, ink bottles, pen trays, and other requisites. These tables were made in mahogany and satinwood, inlaid with marqueterie.

Cartel Clock. The word "cartel," as applied to a clock of a decorative character, has a meaning which is quite familiar to dealers and collectors, but quite different from its dictionary definition. It is used to denote a rather flat-shaped clock which hangs in a panel without a bracket. Cartel clocks are generally of Louis XV or Louis XVI design, and they were made and used in France, England, Germany, and Holland.

Caryatides (Gr.). Carved female figures used to support the entablature and other parts of ancient buildings, and found also in woodwork and furniture of an architectural character.

Certosina (Fr.). See *Intarsia work.*

Chaise bergère, or spoken of simply as *Bergère.* Literally shepherdess. An easy chair, but technically understood to mean an easy chair the arms of which are padded or upholstered solid, instead of being open as are those of a fauteuil (q.v.). The word bergère occurs in Maria Edgeworth and in Lady Blessington's "Idler in France."

Chaise-longue (Fr.). Literally a long chair; but the term is used to describe a sofa made up of two or three separate pieces of furniture, two of which are chairs with the backs carried round the ends, and one is a stool or seat which stands between the two chairs, and the three form a lounging sofa. Sometimes there are only two pieces, with the centre seat omitted. They occurred in the furniture of the time of Louis XV and Louis XVI and of the First Empire.

Commode (Fr.). A French word meaning a chest of drawers of a more or less ornate character, and therefore having a meaning entirely different from that of the English word "commode," which denotes an article of domestic furniture. Hugh Smollett speaks of "my French commode" in 1771, and Horace Walpole writes in 1760 of "the cabinets, *commodes*, and tables." A connoisseur, art dealer, or auctioneer uses the term generally to describe one of those decorative chests of drawers with gilt bronze mountings of the Louis XIV, XV or XVI periods. We should also speak of the famous "Caffieri" commode, or the "Riesener" commode. It was a pair of Louis XV French marqueterie *commodes* which some time ago realized at Christie's 15,000 guineas at the sale of some of the Duke of Leeds' furniture from Hornby Castle.

Console (Fr.). An ornamental bracket for the support of a pier table.

Encoignure (Fr.). A small ornamental table made to fit into the corner of a room.

Escutcheon. A term applied to the ornamental brass plate or mount which covers the keyhole of a drawer or door of a cabinet or table, and is

made in character with the other mountings of the piece.

Escritoire (Fr.). A cabinet fitted with conveniences for writing. The words "upright" or "cylinder front" used as a prefix denote the shape of the escritoire. Both are familiar to the collector or dealer.

Etagère (Fr.). A piece of small ornamental furniture consisting of various stages supported by small columns, forming a series of shelves for the display of china.

Fauteuil (Fr.). An armchair of a French suite of furniture, which generally consisted of fauteuils, chairs, and a *canapé* or settee. The arms of a fauteuil are free and open, and not enclosed with upholstered sides like those of a *chaise bergère* (q.v.).

Flutes. A "fluted" column, pilaster, or leg of a chair or table is that which exhibits grooves cut lengthways. See also *Husks.* Flutes or flutings may be cut spirally or parallel, and they occur mostly in French furniture of the Louis XVI period.

Garderobe (Fr.). Is a French word used in art catalogues as an alternative for wardrobe.

Girandole (Fr). A candlestick with branches for groups of lights, sometimes constructed to resemble a bunch of flowers.

Glastonbury chair. The chair said to have been first used by the abbots of Glastonbury during the reign of Henry VIII. The back, of panelled oak, slants backwards, the legs of X form and arms of a peculiar shape, are made so as to allow the cope or vestment worn by the priest to rest in the "dip" of the arms. Without some such contriv-

ance the vestment, of stiff material, would "ride up" uncomfortably above the sitter's ears. This meaning does not appear in any dictionary, but it is believed to convey the idea of the inventor. Glastonbury chairs are now common in the chancels of our churches.

Guéridon (Fr.). A carved and gilt stand for lamps or flowers, the reproduction of the antique candelabrum adapted to eighteenth-century usage.

Husk. Literally the outer covering of a nut or fruit. It is a favourite form of ornament in the enrichment of the Louis Seize furniture and frequently occurs in the schemes of decoration of that period. "Diminishing husks" are those which, commencing at the top of a pendant with a larger one, gradually diminish towards the bottom. One sees the fluted legs of Louis XVI tables relieved from plainness by flutes grooved in the leg, having husks in these flutes. See *Flutes.*

Intarsia work (Ital.). The decoration of woodwork by the inlay of bone or ivory, practised as early as the end of the thirteenth century in Venice and some other Italian cities. The patterns were of small pieces formed into geometrical designs. This work is sometimes called *Tarsia* or *Certosina.* The latter word is said to be derived from "Certosa," owing to the finest specimens of this kind of work being executed by the monks at the Certosa di Pavia (a Carthusian monastery now suppressed), where the panels of the high screen or backs of the stalls are famous examples of this work. They are said to be the work of Bartolomeo, an Istrian artist, and to date from 1486.

The Knock out. This is the slang term for an arrangement between certain dealers for purchas-

ing goods at public auction upon terms advantageous to themselves. Instances every now and then are made public in which articles of considerable value are sold under the hammer for a third or half the price which with ordinary and unrestricted competition they would realize, and when it becomes known that a sum of money representing part of the unrealized value, has been divided amongst a syndicate of dealers, there is much public indignation. Very few people, however, know anything of the details of the operation, and an explanation may be of interest here, as the system is greatly in force at sales of furniture, where, as occasionally happens, some rare and valuable article is catalogued in a country sale with a lot of very ordinary household furniture. That is the great opportunity of the "knock out."

The dealers present at the sale who intend to put in their claim for the lot or lots in question, abstain from bidding against each other. The first bidder of the syndicate is therefore unopposed by them, and buys the lot at the highest bid against the rest of the "company" in the room. If some one is present who has a knowledge of the value of the article in question, he may of course either outbid the "knock out" representative, or he may bid so high that this purchaser will have to hold the lot if he has bought it dearly, because his confederate dealers will not care to claim it. If, however, he purchases the lot at considerably less than what is considered to be a fair market price, there will be an adjournment after the sale to some convenient place, where the lot or lots purchased by all those in the "knock out" must be put up. This is done in the following manner. We will suppose

that A has bought Lot 100 for, say, £20, and the market value is generally considered to be at least double that sum. The dealers sit round a table, choose a chairman, and then begin to bid, commencing on the left of the holder, *i.e.*, the buyer of the lot. B offers an advance of from 1*s.* to 5*s.*, or if he prefers to do so, makes a much higher bid. The next man advances (in no case less than 1*s.*), until one of the number says, "That's enough for me." He and any others sitting on his left may also retire, being entitled under the rules to their share of extra money. Thus, if they retire when £5 has been advanced, and ten men are present, each one would be entitled to his one-tenth, namely, 10*s.* After these men have retired, the bidding again commences until others retire, when the shares are again calculated, only, for the purpose of convenience, instead of settling after each division, an account is kept by the chairman, and the "paying out" made afterwards. In many cases two or three only will be left in at the finish, when of course the last who retires will gain a much greater share, because the advance money is divided between the two or three left in, and the ultimate holder pays out everyone, saving of course his own share, so that, although the lot in question as a final result may cost him £35, instead of the £20 he pays to the auctioneer, his own share will be perhaps as much as £5 or £6, so that the net cost is only £29 or £30.

Sometimes the gain is considerable, because, owing to the paucity of bidding, the lot falls at a much lower price than it would do if the bidding were spirited and more general. On the other hand, there are many quarrels among members of

the trade over these "knock outs," and ill-feeling thus engendered is displayed by violent and persistent opposition. The property, under these conditions, realizes even more than it would do were it not for this personal feeling which is the cause of the contest.

It not infrequently happens that a small dealer is refused permission to "join" the "bigger" men, or his claim as an "art" man is not allowed; sometimes it may be that in the settlement he is aggrieved, but at the next auction sale where he meets those against whom he has a grievance, he will bid every lot of value up to the maximum price, and so "throw away money," to use the "knock out" expression, which would otherwise be available for division.

It is evident that in some cases combinations of this kind must cause serious loss to the vendors of property, but it must be borne in mind that this is generally the fault of employing an auctioneer who does not understand his business, and numerous cases have been known where, for example, in the case of a silver article being sold, some one has challenged the fact of its being silver, and the auctioneer has allowed it to be sold as plated, in which case those in the "knock out" would divide the difference in value between that of a silver and a plated article.

There are many instances in which an auctioneer who may be accustomed to selling leases or land properties, undertakes the sale of household effects, and such a man probably has but little knowledge of really valuable furniture, and is inexperienced in the ways of dealers. It is, however, quite competent for the vendors of the property, through

their solicitors or through the auctioneer himself, to employ a dealer or valuer of repute, who will protect the property to some extent. In many cases the writer has acted in this way, putting a mark upon certain articles which would be the subject of a "knock out" raid, and thereby insuring that at least something near the value will be obtained.

In the case of articles only understood by the few, and of great value, very considerable sums have been knocked out, and there is a well-known instance of a Louis XV table sold at a public sale at Exeter for £32, and the ultimate holder, a French dealer, paying £1,000, the difference being divided between himself and those who "shared" in the way I have endeavoured to explain. And yet I have no doubt that the good people of Exeter stood round the rostrum, and were quite satisfied that £32 fully represented the value of this shabby old piece of furniture.

As to the legality of the proceedings I am not competent to give an opinion, but it appears to me that, within certain bounds, the members of any trade have the right to combine for their own protection, and to gain any legitimate advantage from their special knowledge and experience. The dealers have the right to buy as cheaply as they can, and as many of them know that amateurs follow their lead, bidding as it were on their judgement, they employ means to defeat these ends and get all the advantage that they can from the sale.

Legitimate means are often, however, exceeded, and there are many "scenes" arising out of the "knocking out" system which renders it too disagreeable for respectable men to join. There are,

however, not a few very amusing incidents which result from the "knock out," and such a one happened to a former client of my own, a member of one of our oldest and most aristocratic families, who, while paying a country visit, went to view a sale in the neighbourhood, when his notice was attracted by an equestrian figure described in the catalogue as of "bronze," but which he rather suspected to be of silver. He was examining it a little more closely, when a dealer, who had been watching him narrowly, said to him in a whisper, "Don't say a word; you can go in with us." My readers would be highly amused if I were at liberty to give the name of my friend to whom this happened, and who told me the story at the time.

Lacquer or *Lac.* Originally a Chinese and Japanese preparation of gum and other ingredients applied several times to woodwork until a thick coating covered the wood. This was decorated with gold, silver and aventurine, with the ornament worked in very slight relief in black, red and bronze-coloured grounds. Lacquer ware was imported into France during the reign of Louis XIV and subsequently, when it was made into furniture, or used for the ornamental panels of cabinets and tables. Later it was made in France, Holland and England. Small boxes of the finest kinds of lac or lacquer are of exquisite finish, and realize very high prices from collectors. See also Chapters III and V.

Lacquer is also a term for a coating of varnish composed of shellac and methylated spirits, to give the brass mounts of furniture the appearance of gold; it is of course very much cheaper than gilding.

Livery cupboards. Cupboards in the first place fitted up by the house carpenters for holding the drinking vessels of the time, which were hung on hooks and replaced after use. They were made in oak, and first came into use about the time of Henry VIII. Further mention is made of them in Chapter I. A specimen is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, and some of later date (seventeenth century) are in the Banqueting Hall of the Stationers' Company, close to Ludgate Hill. (An illustration of one of these is in "Illustrated History of Furniture.")

Loo tables. See *Tables.*

Marqueterie (Fr.) or *Marquetry* (Eng. from Fr.). A mosaic pattern or design of inlaid wood of different coloured pieces of thin material, such as veneer, tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, ivory. See also *Parquetry.*

Mobilier National. In France the furniture belonging to the State Palaces is national property, and there is near the Champs Elysées in Paris a museum especially devoted to this, which every collector should visit. When a French palace is fitted up for the reception of a distinguished foreign guest, the furniture required is taken from the State Collection, "the *Mobilier National*," and returned when the occasion has passed. A great many of the finest examples of French furniture, or *meubles de luxe*, are described and illustrated in a sumptuous work, entitled, "*Les Meubles d'Art du Mobilier National*," by M. Williamson, and should be consulted by those who are interested in this magnificent collection. Lady Dilke has also described and illustrated several well-known pieces, and my own "History of Furniture" gives many

examples. The term is frequently found in catalogues of important sales, when the pieces described are similar to or reproduced from those in the Mobilier National.

Mortise. The oblong square hole made to receive the end of another piece of wood called a tenon, which fits it exactly, and makes what is termed a "mortise and tenon" joint.

Parqueterie (Fr.) or *Parquetry* (Eng. from Fr.). A mosaic of woodwork for house decoration. In cabinet work this term applies to a mosaic of pieces of the same kind of wood, generally arranged in a geometrical pattern, as distinct from *marqueterie*, which is a mosaic of different kinds and colours of veneers (q.v.).

Patera (Lat.), pl. *Paterae.* A flat round or oval ornament in bas-relief. In furniture and decoration of the style known as Adam's, paterae are used in the friezes of tables and cabinets; in chairs the patera will be found just above the tapering leg. See illustrations in Chapter VI.

Pediment. An architectural term used in cabinet work to describe the part of the cabinet above the cornice. Strictly speaking it should be of triangular form, like an obtuse gable, and may have a panel which is sometimes enriched with carved ornament.

Pembroke table. A table with two folding flaps, which, when opened, give the full size of the top. It is generally oval, but sometimes rectangular. The flaps are supported by brackets, or by one leg for each side which pulls out from the centre frame. When they are folded down the table top is an oblong, generally about eighteen to twenty-four inches across, and about twenty-four to thirty inches wide. The difference between a "Pembroke" and a

"Sutherland" table is that, while both open up on similar principles, the "Sutherland" when folded is much narrower, generally only seven or eight inches across, and the table itself is much smaller. Pembroke tables were introduced in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The Sutherland is a modern invention.

Pietra dura (It.), Hard stone. Mosaic, or a design worked in high or low relief, of hard stones, such as jasper and agate. About a hundred years ago there was a fashion for cabinets enriched with panels, ornamental friezes and drawer fronts of *pietra dura*. Paul Beckford, in his "Letters from Italy," published in 1805, writes of some furniture of 1787 as follows: "The best part of the furniture is the inlaid table in Pietra dura, a work of great labour and design." See also Chapter IV.

Pilaster. An architectural term signifying the square column generally attached to a wall as an ornamental support to an arch, and seldom projecting much in advance of the face of it. In woodwork the pilaster really means the flat column, half or a quarter the thickness of the column itself, which we find ornamenting a cabinet. It is generally fluted and sometimes has the capital and base of suitable character to the design, just as it would in architecture. Pilasters occur in Renaissance Italian furniture, and also in those of the Adam style.

Quarrel. The square or diamond-shaped panes of a door which is called a "quarrelled" door. The term is also often stretched to apply to the more fanciful traceries of the doors of English bookcases and cabinets of eighteenth-century style.

Reeded. Reeded ornament means the decora-

tion of a flat surface like the frieze of a table, by narrow slips of wood, finished on the outside with a rounded surface, placed side by side, and should be three, five or seven in number, the odd one in the centre being generally slightly thicker than the others. When legs of tables are described as "reeded" it means that the leg is formed of a number of reeds, which in cabinet work are the reverse of "flutes," the latter being hollows cut out of the substance of the leg. See *Flutes*.

Rococo. The word means literally rock and shell, and is the florid development of the exaggerated decoration which marked the end of the time of Louis XV. It is a style chiefly remarkable for the lavish abundance of details, which are thrown together without propriety and due connection. Scroll and shell ornaments abound; sometimes rockwork pavilions, birds and enormous flowers are combined to produce an overloaded effect in defiance of constructive propriety. See also *Baroque*.

Sabot (Fr.). The French word sometimes used to describe the brass mount which ornaments the foot of a French commode or writing table. The mount which ornaments the *bombé*-fronted part is sometimes alluded to as the "knee" piece.

Secrétaire (Fr.). A writing desk or table fitted with pigeon holes and drawers. In old documents the word is spelt Secretoir.

Sofa table. The design of a sofa table was first published by Thomas Sheraton in 1804; it therefore belongs to his later period. It is an oblong table supported by two standards, one at each end, these standards having each extended feet, and being connected by a stretcher. The top of the table is an oblong, generally about 3 ft. by

1 ft. 9 in. or 2 ft., with an oval-ended folding flap at either end, which when pulled up is supported by little folding brackets. A sofa table has generally two drawers. They were made in rosewood, in mahogany banded with satinwood, and sometimes mounted with brass lion's feet and handles to the drawers, to correspond.

Splat. A word which does not seem to appear in any dictionary, but used to describe the flat member which connects the top of the back of a chair with the frame of the seat, and supports the back of the sitter. Splats may be shaped, plain or carved. See Chapters V and VI.

Sutherland table. See *Pembroke table* and *Tables.*

Tables. In the chapter on Jacobean furniture there is some mention of the seventeenth-century table, the "drawinge" table, "dormant," "extending," "folding," "framed," "joined," "standing," and other kinds now almost forgotten. In the eighteenth-century we have the "wine" table, the "Pembroke," "sofa," "side," "pier" or "console," "kneehole" and the "Carlton." The names of tables come and go with the changing fashions, as, for instance, the round table with pillar-and-claw support which our fathers and grandfathers knew as a "Loo" table, when that game was almost as popular as the now all-prevailing Bridge. Fancy names taken from fashionable leaders of society are of passing interest, but some remain. The "Sutherland" table (q.v.) is one of these, and other instances could be given.

Tarsia work. See *Intarsia.*

Tall-Boy. A name given to a double chest of drawers, one chest standing above another, but

forming one piece of furniture about the time of Chippendale before and after. Some of them have dentelled cornices and quaint ornamental flat brass handles. They are generally made of mahogany, but occasionally of walnut wood, and are really good sound useful pieces of bedroom furniture. There is an illustration of one in Chapter VI.

Tambour (Fr.). This word, and also "tambour-front" as applied to a secretaire or cabinet, signifies that the slide or cylinder which opens when the table is in use, and shuts when not so required, instead of being made in one piece, is formed of a number of reeds, or narrow strips of carefully finished wood, on a canvas background, so jointed that they act in much the same way as the revolving shutters which we have seen fixed to shop windows. Heppelwhite's book contains designs of "tambour" tables, and Sheraton devotes considerable attention to them. Tambour fronts were also fitted to old French furniture.

Tenon. See *Mortise.*

Urn stand. A small square or oval table on four tapering legs, with a little slide which pulls out from under the table top. When tea was a luxurious and expensive article, about the latter end of the eighteenth century, these dainty little tables held the urn, and the teapot for filling was placed on the little slide. See Chapter VI.

Veneer. Thin layers of wood especially prepared for laying on furniture and giving to it what is termed marqueterie decoration. Furniture may be veneered with one kind of wood only, such as satinwood or mahogany, without marqueterie—the advantage of this process over using the solid material being, that it is possible to make a choice

of much better and richer figured woods in veneers than in solid pieces of timber. When fret-cut galleries or stretchers are added to tables of the Chippendale character, the wood to be fret-cut is formed of three or four thin mahogany veneers glued together different ways of the grain in order to toughen or strengthen the perforated decoration.

Vernis Martin (Fr.). Literally Martin's varnish. In the year 1744 a special monopoly for twenty years was granted to Sieur Simon Etienne Martin for "to manufacture all sorts of work in relief and in the style of China and Japan." This was the French successful imitation of the Chinese and Japanese lacquer which hitherto had been imported into France from the East. Subsequently the Martins did not confine themselves to the manufacture of Chinese lacquer, but prepared the panels of articles of furniture for decoration by the artists of the time, who painted on this surface the cupids after Boucher, the garden scenes after Watteau or Lancret which are characteristic of the decorative furniture of the latter part of the Louis XV period. In effect the process of Vernis Martin was somewhat similar to the preparation of a modern carriage panel, the fine glossy surface of which is obtained by successive coatings of a fine varnish, each coating allowed to dry, and then rubbed carefully down before the next application.

Vitrine (Fr.). This French word, meaning literally a window, is often used to describe a cabinet which is intended for the display of china, and has the maximum of glass with the minimum

of wood—really a show case. The term is applied equally to upright cabinets and to those knicknack tables for the display of small curios which have lately become fashionable.

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